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The Irish poems of Alfred
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The Irish Poems of Alfred Perceval Graves

Songs of the Gael
&
Gaelic Story Telling

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THE IRISH POEMS OF ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES

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SONGS OF THE GAEL
A GAELIC STORY-TELLING

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PREFATORY NOTE

This volume contains all those of my poems written under the influence of the Gaelic Revival that I care to preserve. They comprise lays, laments, lullabies, and love songs and ballads, many of them reproducing the old Irish measures and rhyme-schemes, besides a collection of narrative poems set in a Shenachus frame, the story-tellers having foregathered over a good turf fire at a Gaelic League meeting.

I have here to acknowledge my indebtedness to Boosey & Co. for the use of lyrics published to music in "Songs of Old Ireland," "Irish Folk Songs," and "Songs of Erin," to Novello & Co. for like leave to republish songs and ballads in their musical collection of "Irish Songs and Ballads," and finally to Messrs. Breitkopf & Haertel for permission to reprint all the words of "Roseen Dhu," which they publish in musical form.

ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES.

RED BRANCH HOUSE,
WIMBLEDON, 6*th May*, 1908.

1779

PREFACE

Is there anyone who has any acquaintance with Anglo-Irish literature who is ignorant of the immortalizer of the never-to-be-forgotten Father O'Flynn. Who that has ever heard that brilliant song but has desired a closer acquaintance with the other lyrics of its author. For a lyrist by nature is Alfred Perceval Graves; his verses seem to come to him unsought or inspired by the national music of which he is so enthusiastic a devotee. In this respect he resembles, to my thinking, Samuel Lover more than any of our Anglo-Irish poets. I never used to open Lover that I was not reminded more or less of Graves, nor opened Graves that I was not reminded of Lover.

But this was in time gone by. Of late years there has come over much of Graves' poetry a change, and to my mind a highly significant and suggestive change, which differentiates the Songs of the Gael from his preceding poems—from its predecessors in a manner which is quite unmistakable. I call the change significant and suggestive because it marks, in a manner that all may read, the effect of the Gaelic Revival upon one who does not know Gaelic, but who, being an Irishman and a scholar, has felt bound to keep in touch with the modern development of his country and her literature. Indeed, this new note in Mr. Graves' poetry follows, I should think, almost naturally from the surroundings into which his manifold services to the Irish race abroad

has thrown him of recent years. His good work in promoting the endowment and study of Irish in London, his long labours as Hon. Secretary of the Irish Literary Society in London, and his helpful correspondence with Irish Irelanders over the bilingual methods of other countries, must naturally have had their reflex action upon his own creative genius.

It is, then, both noteworthy and of good omen to find that our real Irish literature—that written in the Irish language (which has been for the first time made generally available through the efforts of the Gaelic League and others during the last few years)—has found a sympathetic response in the Anglo-Irish poetry of Mr. Graves. This is a note which we almost entirely miss in Lover, though he has caught it in a couple of lyrics—notably, "A Mother Came," and "What would you do, Love?" In this volume, however, those who know will find suggestions of Irish Ireland poetry upon almost every page. Could anything be more Irish than this, both in execution and conception?—

I'm left all alone like a stone at the side of the street,
With no kind "Good-day" on the way from the many I meet.
Still with looks cold and high they go by, not one brow now unbends,
None holds out his hand of the band of my fair-weather friends.

Neither Callanan nor Mangan could have caught the Irish tone and conception more truly than this. The inimitable Roving Pedlar is just the Red Haired Man's Wife, with the two lines of refrain so cunningly thrown in. The Songs of Summer and Winter are close translations from Kuno

Meyer's prose, excellently done into the original not wholly uniform metre—

Dull red the fern;
Shapes are shadows;
Wild geese mourn
O'er misty meadows.

but, as I said, those who know will recognise free versions of Irish songs in many pieces whose significance will be lost upon the English reader—as in "The Song of the Fairy King," "Alone, all Alone," "When We're Apart," "I Will not Die for Love of Thee," "The Dirge of Oscur," &c.

Nor is the sly note of roguishness which so eminently distinguishes former volumes absent from this one either. It is another characteristic which Mr. Graves shares with Samuel Lover, and which is so pleasant an accompaniment in a lyrist to whom every significant occurrence, mood, feeling, action, idea, tone, passion, suggests a subject for his muse—

Le parfum d'un lis pur, l'éclat d'une auréole
La dernière rumeur du jour,
La plainte d'un ami qui s'afflige et console,
L'adieu mystérieux de l'heure qui s'envole,
Le doux bruit d'un baiser d'amour.

I find, then, the present volume an altogether interesting and suggestive one, not only for itself but also for the way in which it shows how the modern Irish-Ireland renaissance has already affected, and may in the future much more affect, the tone of Anglo-Irish poetry.

DOUGLAS HYDE.

RATRA, FRENCHPARK,
CO. ROSCOMMON.

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SONGS OF THE GAEL

THE MELODY OF THE HARP

Oh! Harp of Erin, what glamour gay,
What dark despairing are in thy lay!
What true love slighted thy sorrow swells,
What proud hearts plighted thy rapture tells.
Round thy dim form lamenting swarm
What Banshees dread! till, glowing warm,
A heavenly iris of hope upsprings
From out the tumult that shakes thy strings.

The chief dejected with drooping brow,
Aroused, erected, is hearkening now,
The while abhorrent of shame and fear
Thy tuneful torrent invades his ear.
He calls his clan: "Who will and can—
Your chieftain follow in Valour's van!"
Then forward thunder the gallant Gael
And death and plunder are o'er the Pale.

The child is calling through fever dreams;
When, softly falling as faery streams,
Thy magic Soontree his soul shall sweep
Into the country of blessed sleep.
To ears that heed not their longing moan
Let lovers plead not with words alone,
But seek thine aid. The haughtiest maid
Will pause by thy sweet influence swayed;
Until the ditty so poignant proves,
She melts to pity and melting loves.

SONGS OF SUMMER AND WINTER

(From the early Irish)

THE FIRST WINTER SONG

Take my tidings!
Stags contend;
Snows descend—
Summer's end!

A chill wind raging;
The sun low keeping,
Swift to set
O'er seas high sweeping.

Dull red the fern;
Shapes are shadows;
Wild geese mourn
O'er misty meadows.

Keen cold limes each weaker wing.
Icy times—
Such I sing!
Take my tidings!

THE FIRST SUMMER SONG

Beltane! the Season's star!
Enchanting then the colours are;
Blackbirds flute a full lay,
Be there but a dart of day.

The loud cuckoo, of dusky hue,
  Cries, "Hail! splendid hour!"
He's gone, the churl of surly brow,
  Every bough is now a bower!

Summer calls; the river falls;
  The swift wild steed to the pool is gone;
The heath outspreads her tresses bright;
  Soft and white is the cannavaun.

Tremors take the heart of the deer;
  Smooth and clear runs the tide;
Season when the ocean sleeps,
  And blossom creeps the earth to hide.

Bees with puny strength upbear
  Through the air their burden sweet;
Cows, mire-footed, mount the hill,
  Ants their fill of honey eat.

Forest harps music sound;
The sail gathers! Peace profound!
Hue on hue the mountain takes,
In misty blue melt the lakes.

A strenuous bard, the corncrake calls ;
The virgin falls fill their urns,
To the panting pool descanting
Till the rushes' talk returns.

Light aloft dart the swallows !
Melody follows the green hill's round ;
The soft rich mast is burgeoning fast,
The frogs in chorus croak around.

Dark is the peat as the raven's coat,
The cuckoo's note bids welcome wide—
The speckled trout from the stream leaps out ;
Long and strong is the warrior's stride.

Man flourishes ; in fair young pride
At his side the maiden buds—
Perfect each plain, majestic, mute—
From crown to root perfect each wood.

The sunny splendour how delightful !
Winter frightful far is fled.
With flower each orchard now is white full,
Such joyous peace has summer shed !

Amid the meadows, among bright petals,
Softly settles a flight of stares ;
Richly around the green field rustles,
Through and through it a white stream fares.

Wild longing is on you for racing horses,
The level courses the ranked lines hold,
And such bright shafts through the blue air shiver
Each flag in the river is flashing gold.

A little importunate one upspringing
Shrills and shrills his tremulous lay!
The lark it is, clear tidings singing
Of May of the colours, enchanting May!

THE SECOND WINTER SONG

Cold, cold until Doom!
The storm goes gathering gloom;
Each flashing furrow a stream;
A full lake every ford in the coom.

Sea large are the scowling lakes,
Thin sleet-spears swell to an host,
Light rains clash as shields on the coast;
Like a white wether's fleece fall the flakes.

The roadside pools are as ponds,
Each moor like a forest uplifts,
No shelter the bird-flock finds,
Breech high the stark snow drifts.

Swift frost has the ways in his hold,
Keen the strife around Colt's standing stone,
And the tempest so stretches her fold
That none can cry aught but "cold"!

THE SECOND SUMMER SONG

Summer's here! free, balm-blowing;
Down the brown wood verdure's glowing;
Slim, nimble deer are leaping;
Smooth the path of seals is showing.

Cuckoos, echoing to each other,
Soothe to blest, restful slumber;
Gentle birds glance on the hill-side,
And swift grey stags in number.

Restless run the deer—behind them
Pours the curled pack, tuneful baying;
From end to end laughs the strand,
Where the excited sea is spraying.

By the playful breezes stirred
Drum Dail's oak tops dimly welter;
While the noble, hornless herd
Seek in Cuan wood a shelter.

Every herb begins to sprout;
The oakwood heights with green abound;
Summer's in, winter's out!
Twisted hollies wound the hound.

Loud the blackbird pipes his lay,
The live wood's heir from May to May;
The excited sea is lulled to sleep,
In air the speckled salmon leap.

The sun is laughing over the land,
To the brood of cares the back of my hand!
Hounds bark, tryst the deer,
Ravens flourish, summer's here!

SONGS OF THE SIDHE

THE KING'S CAVE

Rash Son, return! Yon shores that dazzle
With glowing pleasaunce, glittering plain,
And crystal keep is not Hy-Brazil,
But some false phantom of the main.
And yon bright band thy vision meeting,
Their warbled welcome hither fleeting—
Oh, trust not to their siren greeting,
Oh, wave not, wave not back again!
But veil thine eyes from their entreating,
And list not their enchanting strain!

My Sovran Sire, no cruel vision
Compels my curragh o'er the deep!
Yea, have we seen the land Elysian,
Hy-Brazil, out of Ocean leap.
None ever knew it smiling nearer,
Or hearkened yet, a blessed hearer,
Its Virgin Chorus chanting clearer
O'er lulled Atlantic's cradled sleep.
That strain again! What psalm sincerer
From Angel harps to Earth could sweep.

With hand to brow the Monarch hoary
  Stood rapt upon the Western ray,
Till in a gulf of golden glory
  The bright bark melted o'er the bay.
Then cracked the glass of calm asunder!
Then roared the cave the sea cliff under!
Then sprang to shore, with hoofs of thunder,
  Mannanan's steeds of ghostly grey.
Yet ere the shock, a cry of wonder,
  "Hy-Brazil here!" rose far away.

MORE OF CLOYNE

Little sister, whom the Fay
  Hides away within his doon,
Deep below yon tufted fern,
  Oh, list and learn my magic tune.

Long ago, when snared like thee
  By the Shee, my harp and I
O'er them wove the slumber spell,
  Warbling well its lullaby.

Till with dreamy smiles they sank,
  Rank on rank, before the strain;
Then I rose from out the rath
  And found my path to earth again.

Little sister, to my woe
Hid below among the Shee,
List and learn my magic tune,
That it full soon may succour thee.

THE SONG OF THE FAIRY KING

Bright Queen of Women, oh, come away!
Oh, come to my kingdom strange to see:
Where tresses flow with a golden glow,
And white as snow is the fair body.
Beneath the silky curtains of arching ebon brows,
Soft eyes of sunny azure the heart enthral,
A speech of magic songs to each rosy mouth belongs,
And sorrowful sighing can ne'er befall.

Oh, bright are the blooms of thine own Innisfail,
And green is her garland around the West;
But brighter flowers and greener bowers
Shall all be ours in that country blest.
Or can her streams compare to the runnels rich and rare
Of slow yellow honey and swift red wine,
That softly slip to the longing lip
With magic flow through that land of mine?

We roam the earth in its grief and mirth,
But move unseen of all therein;
For before their gaze there hangs the haze,
The heavy haze of their mortal sin.

But, oh! our age it wastes not; since our beauty tastes not
Of Evil's tempting apple and droops and dies.
Cold death shall slay us never but for ever and for ever
Love's stainless ardours shall illume our eyes.

Then, Queen of Women, oh, come away!
Far, far away to my fairy throne,
To my realm of rest in the magic West,
Where sin and sorrow are all unknown.

THE SONG OF NIAMH OF THE GOLDEN TRESSES

Down in the shades of Lene dark bowering
Hunting red deer through the glades gold flowering;
Oh, Finn! oh, Oscur, our glee!
When on a palfrey milk-white, a whiter one,
Shapely and slight, ah, no shapelier, slighter one,
Waved her sceptre star bright, the far brighter one—
Waved, waved in suppliant plea.

"Niamh am I of the locks gold glittering"—
O, at her cry the birds ceased twittering—
"Sole Child of The King of Youth.
Oiseen's dark eyes in dreams have haunted me,
Oiseen's song streams all day have daunted me!
I, who scatheless of Love long have vaunted me,
Ah! now know his searching truth."

" Oscur and Finn, this long farewell from me!
Nought now can win this strong, sweet spell from me!
  Ochone, ochone, ollalu!"
Panting with love to make my dear bride of her,
Murmuring dove, I leaped to the side of her!
  Forth, forth our white palfrey flew.

On through the tangled and tost cloud armament
Into star-spangled deeps of the firmament;
  While sweet rang Niamh's lay,
" Come, O Oiseen, where sorrow shadeth not,
Scorn is unseen, and anger upbraideth not;
Come with thy Queen where beauty fadeth not,
  Where Youth and Love are for aye!"

THE MAGIC MIST

Dread Bard out of Desmond deep-valleyed,
  Whence comest thou chanting to-night,
From thy brow to thy bosom death pallid,
  Thine eyes like a seer's star-bright?
And whence, o'er thy guest seat allotted,
  These strange, sudden eddies of air,
And why is the quickan flower clotted
  Like foam in the flow of thy hair?

" To and fro in high thought on the mountains
  I strode in my singing-robe green,
Where Mangerton, father of fountains,
  Starts sternly from lovely Loch Lene;

When around me and under and o'er me
Rang melody none may resist;
For rapture I swooned, while before me
Earth faded in magical mist.

"And there my dull body sank sleeping
'Neath quickans of quivering sway,
My soul in her song robe went sweeping
Where Cleena holds court o'er the fay—
The land where all tears are with smiling,
The land where all smiles are with tears,
Where years shrink to days of beguiling,
Days yearn into long, blessed years."

"Arch minstrel of Desmond, we dread thee,
Lest, lifted to-night in our hall,
The spell of lone music that led thee
To Faery, have fettered us all."
"Nay, fear not! though Cleena be calling,
I only her clairseach obey.
To earth the earth body is falling,
The soul soars exultant away."

SONGS OF HEROES

CUCHULLIN AND EMER

CUCHULLIN

Come down, fair Emer, from out thy prison,
Emer, my love, come down to me;
For the radiant moon at last has risen
That shall light us safe to the rolling sea.

EMER

Who is the hero, half-beholden
In the beechen shadow beneath my bower,
Of mien majestic and tresses golden,
Singing thus in the still night hour?

CUCHULLIN

It is I, Cuchullin, thy faithful lover,
Come from afar to set thee free;
It is I that stand in the beechen cover,
Sending my heart in song to thee.

EMER

Of my father stern, alas! I fear me,
Of my brothers brave and my kinsfolk all;
Ere thy mighty hands afar can bear me,
I must pass through their bright-lit banquet hall.

CUCHULLIN

Fear not thy kinsmen's hostile number,
Thy brothers brave and thy haughty sire;
Through the banquet hall they are stretched in slumber,
Quenched are the torches, dead the fire.

EMER

I fear for the fosse so deep and sullen,
And the watch-dogs fierce that bay on its brim;
Not for myself I fear, Cuchullin,
But lest they should rend thee limb from limb.

CUCHULLIN

Thy father's hounds are my old companions,
They will fawn at my feet till, as eagles float
Out from the rock with their young on their pinions,
With thee at my bosom I leap the moat.

EMER

Every Sept is our kinship boasting
Over Bregia north to Dun-Lir;
They will follow at dawn with such a hosting,
Alas! alas! for thy life I fear.

CUCHULLIN

See! how my war-car bounds in the shadows,
Light as a golden boat on the bay!
Lo! my good steeds! that athwart the meadows
Tempest-footed shall whirl us away.

Emer

Good-bye ! for ever my father, my father,
For a loving heart to me you bore.
Good-bye, fair Lusk, I shall never gather
Thy sweet wild blossoms and berries more.
Good-bye for ever, fortress of power,
And the lawn, and the beeches, I loved so well !
Good-bye for ever, my maiden bower,
Where Love first laid me under his spell !
My father—a bitter wrong I do him ;
But thus, even thus, his power is past.
As the sea draws the little Tolka to him,
Thou hast drawn me, Cuchullin, to thee at last.
Like a god to his earthly mistress bending
Thou hast stooped for thy bride from the hills above.
I would die, Cuchullin, thy life defending,
And, oh, let me die if I lose thy love !

EMER'S FAREWELL TO CUCHULLIN

O might a maid confess her secret longing
To one who dearly loves but may not speak !
Alas ! I had not hidden to thy wronging
A bleeding heart beneath a smiling cheek ;
I had not stemmed my bitter tears from starting,
And thou hadst learned my bosom's dear distress,
And half the pain, the cruel pain of parting,
Had passed, Cuchullin, in thy fond caress.

But go! Connacia's hostile trumpets call thee,
  Thy chariot mount and ride the ridge of war,
And prove whatever feat of arms befall thee,
  The hope and pride of Emer of Lismore;
Ah, then return, my hero, girt with glory,
  To knit my virgin heart so near to thine,
That all who seek thy name in Erin's story
  Shall find its loving letters linked with mine.

CUCHULLIN'S LAMENT OVER FERDIAH

Oh, mightiest of the host of Maev,
  Ferdiah, sweetest mouth of song,
  Heroic arm most swift and strong
To slaughter or to save.

Oh, curls, oh, softly rustling wreath
  Of yellow curls that round him rolled,
  One beauteous belt of glistering gold—
Who laid you low in death?

Blue eyes that beamed with friendship bright
  Upon me through the battle press,
  Or o'er the mimic field of chess—
Who quenched your kingly light?

Alas, Ferdiah, overthrown
  By this red hand at last you fell!
  My bosom's brother, was it well?
Ochone, ochone, ochone!

AWAKE, AWAKE, FIANNA!

Awake, awake, Fianna!
For through the shadows, see,
Great Oscur is hosting hither
Beneath the red rowan tree.
And as we march to meet him,
The minstrels together raise
On joyful harp and tympan
The mighty Oscur's praise.

For height and might of stature,
A giant he stands rockfast,
And yet his foot for fleetness
Out-runneth the autumn blast.
His eyes are earnest azure,
His laughter a peal of pearls;
The coolun round his shoulders
A rain of ruddy curls.

Behold, behold, his chariot
Is bursting amid the foe!
Oh, hark! his dread spear hurtles;
Their leader in blood lies low.
A bard of bards is Oscur,
The moulder of mellow words,
A minstrel true is Oscur
Among the chiming chords.

THE ROYAL HUNT

Tantara rara, hark from Tara, how the herald's trumpet clear
Gaily summons King and Commons to the hunting of the deer;
And now the Ard Righ rides before us, circled by his shining court;
Whilst the crowd's acclaiming chorus hails him to the happy sport,
And tantara, tantara, tantara, tantara, hark the bugles' greeting
Soft echoes, re-echoes, re-echoes, and echoes far into the distance retreating.
Tantara rara, lirra lara! sweet the silver bugles blow,
Dogs are doubting, footmen shouting hunt the covers high and low.
Now uncouple Bran the supple, Bran and Scolan swift as flame!
Loose us Laom, loose us Taom, free us ev'ry hound of fame!
The stag is started in the hollow! Hark, the huntsman's view halloo!
Hark, the hounds in chorus follow! Hulla hulla, hulla hoo!
While tantara, tantara, fainter and fainter the horn is now replying,
And further, and further, and further, and further—the hunt in the distance is dying.
Tantara rara now from Tara over hill and dale we go,
While we chevy, yoicks, tantivy, tally, tally, tallyho!

ANCIENT LULLABY

O sleep, my baby, you are sharing
With the sun in rest repairing;
While the moon her silver chair in
Watches with your mother.
Shoheen, sho lo!
Lulla lo lo!

The morning on a bed of roses,
Evening on rude hills reposes:
Dusk his heavy eyelid closes
Under dreamy curtains.
Shoheen, sho lo!
Lulla lo lo!

The winds lie lulled on bluest billows,
Shining stars on cloudy pillows,
Waters under nodding willows,
Mists upon the mountains.
Shoheen, sho lo!
Lulla lo lo!

Upon the fruits, upon the flowers,
On the wood-birds in their bowers,
On low huts and lofty towers
Blessed sleep has fallen.
Shoheen, sho lo!
Lulla lo lo!

And, ah! my child, as free from cumber,
Thus thro' life could'st thou but slumber,
Thus in death go join the number
Of God's smiling angels.
Shoheen, sho lo!
Lulla lo lo!

OISEEN'S LAMENT FOR OSCUR

I sought my own son over Gowra's black field,
Where the host of the Fians was shattered,
Where fell all our mighty ones, and helmet and shield
O'er the red earth lay shamefully scattered.
I sought my own Oscur and my proud heart upleaped,
As at last on a lone ridge I found him,
His stern hand still clinging to the sword that had reaped
Swathe on swathe of the dead foes around him.

He held out his arms, though the drear mist of death
Had begun o'er his bright eyes to gather.
"I thank God," he faltered with his failing breath,
"That thou still art unhurt, oh, my father."
Then down, down I knelt by my heart's dearest one,
All else beside him forgetting;
Till Oscur's proud spirit passed forth like the sun
In a red sea of glory setting.

PATRICK AND OISEEN.

Oiseen, Oiseen, too long is thy slumber.
Oiseen, arise, and give ear to the chant;
Thy force hath forsook thee, thy battles are over,
And without us, old man, thou would'st perish of want.

" My force hath forsook me, my battles are over ;
Since, alas ! the famed empire of Finn is no more,
And without you, indeed, 'tis for want I should perish,
But, since Finn, sweetest music is music no more."

" Nay, foolish old man, for all of thy vaunting,
Of the loud Dord-Finn chorus, the tympan and horn,
Thou hast never heard music like matin bells ringing,
Or solemn psalms sung in the still summer morn."

" Though greatly thou praisest the chants of the clerics,
I had rather lie listening down in the dale
To the voice of the cuckoo of Letterkee calling ;
Or the very sweet thrushes of green Glenn-a-Sgail ;

" Or the song of the blackbird of Derrycarn gushing
So full and so free in the woods of the West
(Oh, Patrick, no hymn under heaven could approach it !
Ah, would that I only were under his nest !).

" And I'd far liefer hearken the eagle's fierce whistle,
From lone Glenamoo or the Ridge by the Stream,
Or list the loud thunder of rushing Tra-Rury,
Or catch on rough Irrus the sea-gull's scream.

" And I'd bid long good-bye to the bells of the clerics,
Could I once again follow o'er mountain and moor
The tune of the twelve fleetest wolf hounds of Erin
Let loose with their faces away from the Suir.

" And Cnu, little Cnu of my bosom, where art thou ?
O small fairy dwarf to the Finians so dear,
Whose harp ever soothed all our sorrows to slumber,
Ah, Cnu, little Cnu, how I would you were here.

" Where is now your betrothed one, oh, Cnu, where is
Blathnaid ?
Who stood up in beauty to sing when you played ;
For the mouth of no mortal such sweetness could utter
As the soft, rosy mouth of that magical maid."

SONGS OF GAEL AND GALL

THE ALARM

Hurry down, hurry down, hurry down ever,
From the wrack-ridden mountain and yellow, rushing river!
Stern horsemen and footmen with spear, axe and quiver,
Oh, hurry down, hurry down, your land to deliver!
Haste, oh, haste! for in cruel might clustering,
Far and near the fierce Nordman is mustering;
Haste, oh, haste! or the daughters ye cherish,
The bride of your bosom shall far more than perish!

Lo! how he toils down that narrow pass yonder,
Ensnared by his spoils and oppressed by his plunder!
Flash on him, crash on him, God's fire and thunder!
And scatter and shatter his fell ranks asunder!
Oh, smite the wolf, ere he slinks from the slaughter!
Oh, rend the shark, ere he wins to deep water!
Pursue and hew him to pieces by the haven,
And feast with his red flesh the exulting sea raven!

BATTLE HYMN

Above the thunder crashes,
Around the lightning flashes:
Our heads are heaped with ashes!
But Thou, God, art nigh!

Thou launchest forth the levin,
The storm by Thee is driven,
Give heed, O Lord, from heaven,
Hear, hear our cry.

For, lo! the Dane defaces
With fire Thy holy places,
He hews Thy priests in pieces,
Our maids more than die.
Up, Lord, with storm and thunder,
Pursue him with his plunder,
And smite his ships in sunder,
Lord God, Most High!

THE RETURN FROM FINGAL

Moan, ye winds, ye caverns call
"Orro, orro!" to our sorrow,
While we bear 'neath one black pall
Brian, Murrough, from Fingal.
Still though wasted, wounded, weary,
On, Dalcassians! to your eyrie,
Eagles, crying from your crag,
"We have rent the Raven's flag."

How O'Brien's banshee cried,
Wailing, warning, ere that morning,
When the Lochlan in his pride
Whitened all the ocean side.

Sea-kings stern from Norway's highlands,
Pirate chiefs from Orkney's Islands,
Lords of Leinster, Britain, Wales,
By the shore a thousand sails!

"On this day," great Brian cried
To the foeman, "Jew and Roman
Christ, our Saviour, crucified.
Hold we truce till Easter-tide!"
Loud rang back their impious laughter,
"Fight comes first, thanksgiving after!"
"Perish then, with shameful loss,
Howling fiends before the Cross!"

Plait and Donnell brand to brand
First in raging wrath engaging,
Heart pierced by each other's hand,
Fell together on the strand.
Then before the sword of Murrough
Fled the Dane; till to our sorrow
Anrud, Norway's champion dread,
Murrough met---and both lay dead.

But our rallying cry awoke,
"Kian, Kian, Desmond's lion!"
And, at Kian's dreadful stroke,
Reeled the Lochlan ranks and broke.
"Now with strains of martial glory
To the King to tell our story,"
But we found great Brian low;
Och, ochone! och ullalo!

Moan, ye winds, ye caverns call
"Orro, orro!" to our sorrow,
While we bear 'neath one black pall
Brian, Murrough, from Fingal.
Still though wasted, wounded, weary,
On, Dalcassians! to your eyrie,
Eagles, crying from your crag,
"We have rent the Raven's flag."

SONGS OF CHIEFTAINS

THE MARCH OF THE MAGUIRE.

My grief, Hugh Maguire,
That to-night you must go
To wreak your just ire
On our murderous foe;
For, hark! as the blast
Thro' the bowed wood raves past,
The great oaks, aghast,
Rock, reel and crash below.

Uncheered of your spouse,
Without comfort or care,
All night you must house
In some lone, shaggy lair;
The lightning your lamp,
For your sentry the tramp
Of the thunder round your camp;
Hark! 'tis there, 'tis there!

But to-morrow your sword
More terrific shall sweep
On our foe's monstrous horde
Than this storm o'er the steep;
And his mansions limewhite
Flame with fearfuller light
Than yon bolts thro' black night
Hurled blazing down the deep.

CHIEFTAIN OF TYRCONNELL

Sore misery to Erin that you spread
Your sails for far-off Espan, Hugh the Red!
But sorest doom that on a foreign strand
Quenched your keen eye, and from your falt'ring hand
Struck down the faithful brand.

Who now for us shall sweep the cattle spoil
In bellowing tumult o'er the foamy Foyle?
And till the steers are driv'n dispersed to sward,
Hurl back, like thee, the Avenger from the ford,
Hugh O'Donnell of the Sword?

Who now upon the plunderers from the Pale
Shall wreck the fiery vengeance of the Gael?
With sudden onslaught strike the Saxon crew
And smite them as you smote them, through and through—
Chieftain of Tyrconnell, who?

Last, who like thee, with comforts manifold
Shall keep and cherish sick and poor and old?
For, ah! thy open ever-flowing store
Of food and drink and clothing, maet galore,
Fails them now for evermore.

THE FLIGHT OF THE EARLS

To other shores across the sea
We speed with swelling sail;
Yet still there lingers on our lee
A phantom Innisfail.
Oh, fear not, fear not, gentle ghost,
Your sons shall turn untrue!
Though fain to fly your lovely coast,
They leave their hearts with you.

As slowly into distance dim
Your shadow sinks and dies,
So o'er the ocean's utmost rim
Another realm shall rise;
New hills shall swell, new vales expand,
New rivers winding flow,
But could we for a foster land
Your mother love forego?

Shall mighty Espan's martial praise
Our patriot pulses still,
And o'er your memory's fervent rays
For ever cast a chill?
Oh no! we live for your relief,
Till, home from alien earth,
We share the smile that gilds your grief,
The tear that gems your mirth.

LOVED BRIDE OF O'BYRNE

Oh! loud keens the wind by peak and pass
From Lugnaquillia to lone Kippure,
Fierce, fierce fall the flakes in Glenmacnass,
Deep mounts the drift in Glenmalure.
But shrill as the shrillest blasts that blow,
Ochone! The Gaval Rannall cry,
For whiter, colder, stiller than the snow,
Loved Bride of our O'Byrne, you lie.

Black, black o'er the mountains cloud on cloud
Comes gliding while we bear beneath
White, white on our shoulders in her shroud,
Our dearest to the door of death.
Ah! hark, how wild Avonbeg above
Wails back to moaning Avonmore,
"For ever now the faithful lamp of love
Is quenched in frowning Ballin'core."

LAMENT FOR OWEN ROE O'NEILL

Oh! black breaks the morrow in tempest and gloom,
When we bear to our sorrow O'Neill to the tomb.
Whilst with wailing and weeping the long, long train
Comes woefully weeping o'er Uladh's dark plain.

'Twas not reaving their cattle, you fell, Owen Roe,
Or in red, raging battle, your face to the foe.
But the black snake of treason they sent, O'Neill,
To pierce you with poison since you scoffed at their steel.

Oh! leader God-gifted, oh! arm stern of stroke,
That well-nigh had lifted from our shoulders the yoke,
Your death-bell is ringing our doom, our doom,
For with you we are bringing our hopes to the tomb!

HEROINES OF LIMERICK

Faugh-a-balleach! Munster men,
  Once more your dogged foe defying,
Though ye count as one to ten,
Forth, forth to rout the Dutch again!

Faugh-a-balleach! 'Tis for greed
  They strike, but we for Faith and Freedom;
For a despot's throne they bleed,
But we for Erin's sacred need.

Faugh-a-balleach! At your side
  With shot and shell and rifle ready,
Pale and gaunt and hollow-eyed,
Stand Mother, Daughter, Sister, Bride.

Faugh-a-balleach! Hark! they cry,
  "We, too, are here to share your glory;
Or if dark defeat be nigh,
With you the proudest death to die!"

ROSEEN DHU

I. THE SHADOW OF A DREAM

O ! sorrowful dream of the past
That dissolved in the morn's magic ray,
Why again is thy grey shadow cast
Like a false, fairy mist o'er my way ?

Yet the war-ships ride on through the bay
With the King's flag aflame from each mast.
Oh ! Liberty, when shall thy day
Light the pale brows of Erin at last ?

II. MY ROSE OF HOPE.

For Erin's sake I've faced the field of slaughter,
I've shared her smiles and mixed with hers my tears,
And, oh ! her rarest, fairest, fondest daughter
Is now my rose of hope, my rue of fears.

Yet, when we parted in the forest shadow,
Oh ! there was that within her wondrous eyes
That sent me singing down the primrose meadow,
As if I'd found the path to Paradise !

III. HER ANSWER

The earth is as green as fairy rings,
The air one flutter and flash of wings,
The heath and clover a-buzz with bees
And white, white over the hawthorn trees;

While up, high up, on his sunbeam stair,
The lark goes dancing my joy to share;
For, oh! by his song he surely knows
The answer I've won from my little dark Rose!

IV. THE CLARION'S CALL

The clarion's crying! the drum's replying;
  From cliff to cave the beacons wave
Their fiery fingers, now he who lingers
  Is but a slave—a crouching slave!

Adieu! adieu! my Roseen Dhu,
Adieu! adieu! adieu! adieu!
  "O draw your rein," she cried again
"O! let me bide with you!
Let me ride with you!"

So together, by hills of heather
  And moorland brown, we thundered down,
With glancing steel and dancing feather,
  To Limerick town, to Limerick town.

Now o'er the Shannon,
With roaring cannon
And roll of drums, our foeman comes ;
His carbines rattle !
O, God of battle,
Our cause defend unto the end !

V. SHE STOOD AT MY SIDE

She stood at my side, my bride, my own Roseen Dhu,
Though with death laden bullet on bullet the air was athrill,
In her fair bloom to dare doom,
While the foe ever fiercer grew,
To the storm flying swarm upon swarm ;
Yet we beat them backward still.

But with fell fireballs still battering our walls till they brake,
Again to the onset flashed the fierce Saxon stream.
Then with white hand a bright brand
Waving, " Onward ! " she cried, " for Erin's sake ! "
Down we leapt, on we sternly swept,
Till we clashed in the shock supreme.

But as their spear hedge, like sedge, mowing down amain,
Out, out of the city we hurled our headlong foes,
Through the dread shout and the red rout,
Where she cheered our charge to the plain,
Shrieked a shell ! dead my darling fell !
Oh ! my grief ! Oh ! my woe of woes !

Oh ! sorrowful shades of the Past,
Caught for one magic moment away,
Again you are gathering fast,
Like false, fairy mists o'er our way !

THE WILD GEESE

AH, WHY, PATRICK SARSFIELD

Ah, why, Patrick Sarsfield, did we let your ships sail
Away to French Flanders from green Innisfail ?
For far from your country you lie cold and low ;
Ah, why, Patrick Sarsfield, ah, why did you go ?

We pray'd, Patrick Sarsfield, to see you sail home,
Your flag waving victory above the white foam.
But still in our fetters, poor slaves, we live on ;
For, oh, Patrick Sarsfield, for, oh, you are gone !

SHULE AGRA !

His hair was black, his eye was blue,
His arm was stout, his word was true ;
I wish in my heart I was with you !
  Go-thee-thu, mavourneen slaun !
Shule, shule, shule agra !
Only death can ease my woe,
Since the lad of my heart from me did go,
  Go-thee-thu, mavourneen slaun !

The Wild Geese

'Tis oft I sat on my true love's knee,
Many a fond story he told to me,
He told me things that ne'er shall be,
Go-thee-thu, mavourneen slaun!
Shule, shule, shule agra!
Only death can ease my woe,
Since the lad of my heart from me did go,
Go-thee-thu, mavourneen slaun!

I sold my rock, I sold my reel;
When my flax was spun I sold my wheel
To buy my love a sword of steel,
Go-thee-thu, mavourneen slaun!
Shule, shule, shule agra!
Only death can ease my woe,
Since the lad of my heart from me did go,
Go-thee-thu, mavourneen slaun!

But when King James was forced to flee,
The Wild Geese spread their wings to sea,
And bore mabouchal far from me,
Go-thee-thu, mavourneen slaun!
Shule, shule, shule agra!
Only death can ease my woe,
Since the lad of my heart from me did go,
Go-thee-thu, mavourneen slaun!

I saw them sail from Brandon Hill,
Then down I sat and cried my fill,
That every tear would turn a mill,
Go-thee-thu, mavourneen slaun!

Shule, shule, shule agra!
Only death can ease my woe,
Since the lad of my heart from me did go,
Go-thee-thu, mavourneen slaun!

I wish the King would return to reign,
And bring my true love back again;
I wish, and wish, but I wish in vain,
Go-thee-thu, mavourneen slaun!
Shule, shule, shule agra!
Only death can ease my woe,
Since the lad of my heart from me did go,
Go-thee-thu, mavourneen slaun!

I'll dye my petticoat, I'll dye it red,
And round the world I'll beg my bread,
Till I find my love alive or dead,
Go-thee-thu, mavourneen slaun!
Shule, shule, shule agra!
Only death can ease my woe,
Since the lad of my heart from me did go,
Go-thee-thu, mavourneen slaun!

THE SAILOR GIRL

When the Wild Geese were flying to Flanders away,
I clung to my Desmond beseeching him stay,
But the stern trumpet sounded the summons to sea,
And afar the ship bore him, mabouchal machree.

And first he sent letters, and then he sent none,
And three times into prison I dreamt he was thrown ;
So I shore my long tresses, and stain'd my face brown,
And went for a sailor from Limerick town.

Oh ! the ropes cut my fingers, but steadfast I strove
Till I reached the Low Country in search of my love.
There I heard how at Namur his heart was so high
That they carried him captive, refusing to fly.

With that to King William himself I was brought,
And his mercy for Desmond with tears I besought.
He considered my story, then smiling, says he,
" The young Irish rebel for your sake is free."

" Bring the varlet before us. Now, Desmond O'Hea,
Myself has decided your sentence to-day—
You must marry your sailor with bell, book, and ring,
And here is her dowry," cried William the King !

SHE IS MY LOVE

She is my love beyond all thought,
  Though she has wrought my deepest dole ;
Yet dearer for the cruel pain
  Than one who fain would make me whole.

She is my glittering gem of gems,
  Who yet contemns my fortune bright ;
Whose cheek but glows with redder scorn
  Since mine has worn a stricken white.

She is my sun and moon and star,
  Who yet so far and cold doth keep,
She would not even o'er my bier
  One tender tear of pity weep.

Into my heart unsought she came,
  A wasting flame, a haunting care;
Into my heart of hearts, ah! why?
  And left a sigh for ever there.

THE COLLEEN DONN

My Colleen Donn of the golden glances,
  The storm black tresses and the shape of snow,
'Tis little surely your light heart fancies
  How for your sake a grieving man I go.

The lone night long under woe I'm waking,
  While you are taking the joys of sleep;
The bright day through, while you bless another,
  Your troth plight breaking, like a ghost I creep.

My Colleen Donn of the dancing dimple,
  The soft discourses and the love-lit eyes,
How true I thought you, how fresh and simple
  In every wish, oh! how unworldly wise!

My Colleen Donn, there was that about you,
  None dared to doubt you—yet you're gone, you're gone!
My winter's warmth, and my summer's shadow,
  I'm but lost without you, my own Colleen Donn.

THE MINSTREL LOVER

We met when roses wreathed the grey ramparts of
O'Connor,
She a maid of Royal blood, her proud father's minstrel I;
Her eyes looked love in mine, but my lips were sealed by
honour,
So I sailed from Connaught kind for Espan's alien sky;
But her last faithful glance cheered my gloom and
charmed my slumbers,
And I toiled on in trust that her hand I yet might
claim,
Till the harp her spirit swayed thrilled all Europe with its
numbers,
And the chief of Erin's poets for her dear sake I became.

Her haughty father sped, again I sought her castle,
For the joyous Beltane feast as a roaming bard arrayed,
And when each minstrel else had made music for the
wassail,
Before my lady bright I stood forth once more and
played.
I told my tale of love, and when its transport ended,
Cast off my wanderer's weeds and my name of fame con-
fessed;
In her rapture she arose—from her silver seat descended,
And owned me her heart's lord before each glittering
guest.

I SHALL NOT DIE FOR LOVE OF THEE

O, Woman, shapely as the swan,
Shall I turn wan for looks from thee ?
Nay bend those blue love-darting eyes
On men unwise, they wound not me.
Red lips and ripe and rose soft cheek,
Shall limbs turn weak and colour flee,
And languorous grace and foam-white form,
Shall still blood storm because of ye ?

Thy slender waist, thy *cool* of gold
In ringlets rolled around thy knee,
Thy scented sighs and looks of flame
They shall not tame my spirit free.
For, Woman, shapely as the swan,
A wary man hath nurtured me ;
White neck and arm, bright lip and eye,
I shall not die for love of ye !

A LAMENT

Dark, dark drives the tempest o'er Erin to-day,
And rends the green leaf from the writhing oak spray ;
Thus struggling forlorn under Heaven's blackest cope,
Heart tortured we mourn the crushed crown of our hope.

Through foemen unnumber'd, in proud undismay,
To Freedom's pure heights he still won us the way ;
Till planting elate on the proud peak our flag,
The fierce bolt of fate dashed him dead from the crag.

Moan, hollow wind, moan ! weep, weep, heavy cloud,
Sob for sob, tear for tear, for the chief in his shroud !
Ochone ! and ochoro ! our Heart, Hand and Head,
To our black, bitter sorrow on the bier you lie dead !

LOVELY ANNE

Lovely Anne, my lovely Anne !
Oh, hearken to my bitter cry !
Alone, on rugged Slievenaman,
For your fond sake I lie ;
For you I've fled my friends, fled my clan,
Fair Saxon, have you turned untrue ?
And has my lovely Anne, my lovely Anne,
But brought me here to rue ?

Lovely Anne, oh, lovely Anne,
Since darkly here I laid me down,
How oft the wind-swept cannavaun
Has seem'd your flutt'ring gown ;
And once a maid, with bright milking can,
Brush'd hitherward across the dew,
" 'Tis she, my lovely Anne, my lovely Anne ! "
She turned and frown'd me through.

Lovely Anne, oh, lovely Anne !
Cold morn is mounting o'er the height,
And your forsaken Irishman
Afar must take his flight.
Heaven's curse upon the black, heartless ban,
That sunders thus the fond and true.
Adieu, my lovely Anne, my lovely Anne,
For evermore adieu !

SONGS OF THE GAEL

KITTY BAWN

Before the first ray of blushing day
Who should come by but Kitty Bawn,
With her cheek like the rose on a bed of snows,
And her bosom beneath like the sailing swan.
I looked and looked till my heart was gone.

With the foot of the fawn she crossed the lawn,
Half confiding and half in fear;
And her eyes of blue they thrilled me through
One blessed minute; then like the deer
Away she started and left me here.

Oh, Sun, you are late at your golden gate,
For you've nothing to show beneath the sky
To compare to the lass who crossed the grass
Of the shamrock field ere the dew was dry,
And the glance she gave me as she went by.

BESIDE THE RIVER LOUNE

Nevermore, where yon ash is weeping,
Old and hoar, over Loune,
Nevermore shall my heart go leaping
At the glance of her gown.

Nevermore, when snowflakes falling
Blanch the wrinkled, writhing boughs,
Shall I hear my love's voice kindly calling
Her "Come home!" to the cows.

O'er our tryst by the lone Loune water,
At the Ford of the Sloes,
Crept the mist, while the wild brown water
In anger arose.
Step by step each ford stone seeking,
She shimmered at my side,
But a sudden spate it swept her shrieking
Down the red, raging tide.
All night with the flood fiend wrestling
I sought her forlorn,
Till amid the blue forget-me-not nestling
I found her at morn.
Like a maiden of marble moulded,
All at peace my love lay there,
With her hands upon her bosom folded,
Meekly folded in prayer.

LAST NIGHT I DREAMT OF MY OWN TRUE LOVE

Last night I dreamt of my own true love!
Methought, methought beneath the stars
There fluttered, fluttered at my casement bars
A wildly wailing turtle dove.
I caught him in, and lo! I found
A letter to his bosom bound.

But when the ribbon I untwined
That wreathed his wing of restless snow,
By his dark welling life-blood's flow
Alas! 'twas all incarnadined,
Deep crimson as the letter's seal
From out a wound no art could heal.

I made my sobbing bird a nest
Within my softly shelt'ring arms;
His panting pain, his wild alarms
I lulled at last to languid rest;
When, oh! with my own true love's eyes
He wakes and looks me through and dies.

O, BRANCH OF FRAGRANT BLOSSOM

O, branch of fragrant blossom,
How the heart in my bosom
Lay heaving before you with hopeless sigh;
Till your voice grew low and tender,
And a soft, love-lit splendour
Shone out to save me from your dark, dreamy eye.

O, branch of rosy blossom,
Radiant bride of my bosom,
My heart heaves no longer with hopeless sigh;
For you're the blessed shadow
Upon my burning meadow,
My sunshine in winter, and my love till I die.

ALONE, ALL ALONE

When westward I'm called,
'Tis not east I'd be going.
Should I sup the salt wave
With the pure spring to hand,
Or prefer the base weed
To the richest rose blowing,
Or not follow my own love
The first through the land ?

Oh, my heart is a fountain
Of sorrow unspoken,
A virgin nut-cluster
Untimely down torn !
And, oh, but my heart
Flutters bleeding and broken,
Like a bird beating out
Its wild life on a thorn.

His cheek is the hue
Of the blackberry blossom,
And blackberry blue
His dark tresses above ;
And I'm cryin' without,
Who should lie in his bosom,
And I doubt and I doubt
If he's true to his love.

'Tis time I should part you,
Proud, hurrying City;
For your tongues they cut sharper
By far than your stone,
And your hearts than that same
Are more hardened to pity;
So my love I'll go seeking,
Alone, all alone!

SINCE WE'RE APART

Since we're apart, since we're apart,
The weariness and lonely smart
Are going greatly round my heart;
Upon my pillow, ere I sleep,
The full of my two shoes I weep,
And like a ghost all day I creep.

'Tis what you said you'd never change
Or with another ever range,
Now ev'n the Church is cold and strange.
There side by side our seats we took,
There side by side we held one book;
But with another now you look.

And when the service it was o'er,
We'd walk the meadow's flow'ry floor,
As we shall walk and walk no more.
For while beneath the starry glow,
Ye two sit laughing light and low,
A shade among the shades I go

O LOVE, 'TIS A CALM, STARRY NIGHT

O love, 'tis a calm, starry night;
No breath stirs the leaves below;
My steed is at the door
And my ship is by the shore,
Then come down to me, my darling, and away, away we'll go;
Then come down, and far, and far away we'll go.

Your guardian is sleeping above,
Base churl, with his taunt and blow!
The house is all at rest;
Only you that I love best
Like a busy mouse keep rustling to and fro,
To make ready still keep rustling to and fro.

Now soft you come stealing down the stair!
My heart it is all in a glow;
O, stay your silent tears,
O, cease your maiden fears!
For the world's wealth I'd never from you go, or work you woe!
For the world's wealth how could I use you so.

OVER HERE

Oh, the praties they are small,
  Over here, over here!
Oh, the praties they are small,
  Over here!
Oh, the praties they are small,
And we dig them in the fall,
And we eat them coats and all,
  Full of fear, full of fear.

Oh, I wish we all were geese,
  Night and morn, night and morn,
Oh, I wish we all were geese,
  Night and morn!
Oh, I wish we all were geese,
For they live and die in peace,
Till the hour of their decease,
  Stuffing corn, stuffing corn.

Oh, we're down into the dust,
  Over here, over here!
Oh, we're down into the dust,
  Over here!
Oh, we're down into the dust,
But the God in Whom we trust,
Will yet give us crumb for crust,
  Over here, over here!

REMEMBER THE POOR

Oh ! remember the poor when your fortune is sure,
And acre to acre you join ;
Oh ! remember the poor, though but slender your store,
And you ne'er can go gallant and fine.
Oh ! remember the poor when they cry at your door
In the raging rain and blast ;
Call them in, cheer them up with the bite and the sup,
Till they leave you their blessing at last.

The red fox has his lair, and each bird of the air
With the night settles warm in his nest,
But the King who laid down His celestial crown
For our sakes, He had nowhere to rest.
Oh ! the poor were forgot till their pitiful lot
He bowed Himself to endure ;
If your souls ye would make, for His Heavenly sake,
Oh ! remember, remember the poor.

A LULLABY

I've found my bonny babe a nest
On Slumber Tree ;
I'll rock you there to rosy rest,
Astore machree !
Oh, lulla lo ! sing all the leaves
On Slumber Tree ;
Till everything that hurts or grieves
Afar must flee.

I'd put my pretty child to float
Away from me,
Within the new moon's silver boat
On Slumber Sea.
And when your starry sail is o'er,
From Slumber Sea,
My precious one, you'll step to shore
On Mother's knee.

LIKE A STONE IN THE STREET

I'm left all alone like a stone at the side of the street,
With no kind " good day " on the way from the many I meet.
Still with looks cold and high they go by, not one brow now unbends,
None holds out his hand of the band of my fair-weather friends.

They helped me to spend to its end all my fine shining store,
They drank to my health and my wealth until both were no more.
And now they are off with a scoff as they leave me behind,
" When you've ate the rich fruit, under foot with the bare, bitter rind."

There's rest deep and still on yon hill by our old church's side,
Where I laid you long ago, to my woe, my young one year's bride.

Then, ochone! for relief from my grief into madness I flew.
Would to God ere that day in the clay I'd been covered with you!

THE SONGS ERIN SINGS

I've heard the lark's cry thrill the sky o'er the meadows of Lusk,
And the first joyous gush of the thrush from Adare's April wood,
At thy lone music's spell, Philomel, magic stricken I've stood,
When in Espan afar star on star trembled out of the dusk.

While Dunkerron's blue dove murmured love, 'neath her nest I have sighed,
And by mazy Culdaff with a laugh mocked the cuckoo's refrain,
Derrycarn's dusky bird I have heard piping joy hard by pain,
And the swan's last lament sobbing sent over Moyle's mystic tide.

Yet as bright shadows pass from the glass of the darkening lake,
As the rose's rapt sigh must die, when the zephyr is stilled;
In oblivion grey sleeps each lay that those birds ever trilled,
But the songs Erin sings from her strings shall immortally wake.

THE ROVING PEDLAR

Do you mind the glad day
When we ranged, we two, o'er the green,
Amid the white May,
On the borders of lovely Lough Lene,
How out of the road came the roving old pedlar's long cry:
"Come buy my pretty wares, pretty wares, come buy, come buy!"

Not a cloud in the air,
All the woods one warble of song,
And we just a pair
Of wood-pigeons coo-cooing along;
When he, overhearing us, cunningly alters his cry:
"Wedding poplins, wedding veils, wedding rings! come buy, come buy!"

One look in my eyes
And you took, mabouchaleen bawn,
My third finger's size
With a ribbon of rustling finane;
And when he'd the wedding ring sold, that old pedlar so sly,
"Just that poplin, just that veil, just those gloves," he coaxed us to buy.

A GAELIC STORY-TELLING

A GAELIC STORY-TELLING

A SHENACHUS

We were some of us old, but the more of us young ;
Yet each of us shamed for the slip of our Tongue ;
And studying, so, just as busy as Brownies,
At those little green primers of good Father Growney's.
When the gas jets a sudden strange jumping fit took,
And the print grew so dim in each slim Gaelic book,
That the teacher, our own Creeveen Eveen himself,
His volume laid by with a laugh on the shelf,
" And," says he, " boys and girls, by this gas dhoul we're bet.
But we've got a full hour for a Shenachus yet.
So out with the gas, a fit light for a serf,
And heap up instead a big bonfire of turf ! "

One blast of the bellows—it yellows, it glows,
While a swirl of blue smoke up the black chimney goes.
" Now range yourselves all in a ring round the fire,
The priest by the parson, the clerk by the squire ;
The landlord true blue facing tenants true green,
With madam and maiden mixed nicely between ;
While Michael Mac Art fresh from Trinity College
First gives us a taste of his Classical knowledge ;
For a little bird told me, that always was wise,

He's a poem sent in for the Chancellor's prize!
He doesn't deny it—Now, Michael, man, start,
For each girl on your Orpheus has just set her heart.
Colleens, isn't it so?"
"Yes, indeed," cried the girls,
So Michael he twitched for awhile at his curls,
Then held up his head and this old Grecian lay
Of Eurydice's Orpheus he chanted away.

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

As fair Eurydice, with footfall light,
Roved the Thessalian woods one moonlit night,
Singing amidst the gentle Naiad throng,
Who ranged attentive to her voice, a song
That her own Orpheus taught her; suddenly
Aristæus, hot with honey-wine, comes by,
Follows the music ardently, and ere
The singer and the listening nymphs are 'ware,
Leaps in their midst, and, kindling to her charms,
Clasps at Eurydice with eager arms.
She, the sweet melody on her lovely lips
Snapt with a scream, from his embraces slips,
And crying: "Orpheus, Orpheus!" swift as light,
Flies from the woods, he following, through the night;
Until, escaped from the pursuer's hand,
O'er the full Hebrus she has swum to land.
When, through the shelter of the sloping sward,
A hooded snake that haunts the river ford
Shoots its lithe length to meet her from the ground,
And, ere she sees it, darts a deadly wound.

She still would flee, if but she still may reach
Her home, now nigh, and find a friendly leech,
Or die at least in her dear love's embrace.
But the black poison runs a swifter race!
Her footsteps fail, her limbs their force forget,
Her fluttering sighs came fast and faster yet;
The landscape swims around—she falters, falls—
Thrice strives to rise, and thrice on Orpheus calls,
Each cry a fainter echo of the last,
And murmuring "Orpheus" still, the gentle spirit passed.

Then Aristæus, stricken with remorse,
Braves the loud flood, and kneels beside her corse,
And chafes her hands, and every art essays
From her last sleep the lovely nymph to raise.
But all in vain, and, turning with a tear,
Slow he retraces his too swift career.

Anon the Naiads from the general flight
Toward their Hebrus one by one unite;
And when—ah! woeful hap—they see her slain,
Beat their white breasts, and lift the cry of pain.
Woods, vales and mountains mingle in the dirge,
The desolate river sobs from verge to verge;
And Night herself, veiling her starry eyes,
Leads the lament with long-drawn tempest sighs.

O, say not that two sympathetic souls
Can only mix as outward sense controls.
Far off the mother of an only daughter,
Pierced with her pangs, has tremblingly resought her;

The absent brother feels the fatal power
That strikes the partner of his natal hour ;
And the fond youth, beneath far distant skies,
Knows the sad moment when his mistress dies.
Thus Orpheus, who had left his lovely spouse
For Delphi's steep to pay his filial vows
To King Apollo, starts from sleep to hear
His name thrice shrieked with anguish in his ear ;
To earth he starts—a weapon wildly snatches—
Hies through the hall, the darkling door unlatches,
And stands bewildered in the moonlight clear,
Crying, " Eurydice, your love is here ; "
Till the night air on his uncovered brows
Blowing awhile his woe-stunned wits arouse.
But sense no solace yields, and, as he flies
With homeward haste, still dark and darker rise
Death's phantom fears, till on the dewy lea
Orpheus has clasped his cold Eurydice,
And laid alone by her with weeping strong
And sobs tempestuous tosses all day long.

Then King Apollo pitying the pain
Of his dear son, whom most he loved of men,
Stands by his side, his awful beauty veiling
In softest cloud, and thus rebukes his wailing :
" Rise, Orpheus, rise, infatuate with grief ;
Orpheus arise, Apollo brings relief ;
For not in vain hast thou required my favour
With filial vows and first fruits sweet of savour ;
Nor idly did thy docile genius follow
The magic music of thy sire Apollo.

No Marsyas thou, but reverently mute
To hear and learn the language of my lute,
And therefore thou of living men alone
Canst charm all cruel force with music's moan.

" For this did Jason, warned of Chiron old,
In choice of Questers for the Fleece of Gold,
Prefer thee helmsman of the hero crew
Of Argo, wisely yielding thee thy due ;
Else had they never rowed to Colchian seas
Past those gray cliffs, the dread Symplegades.
For, as with oars that to thy harpening clear
In cadence dipped, the desperate course they steer,
From the almost shock the shores resilient flew
Rapt to thy lay and let the Questers through.

" Thou too, when far upon the Western Main
Fierce thirst possessed the Heroes, with thy strain
Alone could'st win from the Hesperian Maids
The golden offspring of their orchard shades ;
And after, when the Argonautic oars
Approached too near those bark-beguiling shores,
Where bleach the bones of many a music-slain
Mariner—and the Siren Sisters' strain
Was with its amorous enchantment stealing
Each Quester's soul, thy heavenly pæan pealing,
Struck dumb the weird witch-music, and reclaimed
Their service due, who else The Quest had shamed."

" And what avails that skill," the mourner sighs,
" Oh ! father mine, when low my mistress lies ;

Though, when I luted, love stole softly o'er her,
The song that won her never can restore her."
" Orpheus, I heard you once, when stars were clear,
Echoing the strains that thrill from sphere to sphere ;
You sang, whilst Argo o'er the ocean hoary
Leaped to thy lay, Creation's awful story.
Softly you sang, and though you knew it not,
Nature was tranced around in troubled thought,
Fearful lest thou should'st wake that louder lay
Intolerable, that shook her natal day.
Idly she feared, for I of gods and men,
Save Love alone, have knowledge of that strain,
And I but once its music can recall.
Yet, for I love thee, Son, yea more than all
My children, and now pity bride-bereft,
Thee I endue with my transcendent gift,
The song of songs, to whose ecstatic strain
Informing Love from Chaos' dread inane
Called the young Cosmos. Lift that psalm again,
And earth shall quake, the Empyrean lower,
Seas rage, and at the last the Infernal Power
Ope to thy lay the inexorable door,
And thy lost mistress to thine arms restore."

He said, and vanished, whilst a rosy source
Of sudden sunset, flowing, found the corse,
Kissed her cold feet, suffused her bosom's snow,
Blushed in her cheek, and melted on her brow.
Then Orpheus : " For the dim discoloured light
Of Hymen's torch upon my nuptial night,

This radiant omen, Phœbus, I accept ; "
Whilst o'er the lute his eager fingers swept,
Preluding softly to that mystic strain,
Which he but wakened once, and none shall wake again.

Then the sphere-music stole upon the harp,
Pregnant with rapturous pain and pleasure sharp.
All things that are, enchanted, paused to hear,
Save the small growths that sprang to be more near,
For Joy and Sorrow, Love and Life, and Death
Trembled together in that tuneful breath.

Anon the wild sphere-music louder grew,
Loud as when first the parent atoms flew
Of air and water, fire and formless earth,
Each seed to share an elemental birth ;
For to that cadence arched the skyey dome,
The soft soil hardened, Ocean sought his home,
While shapes of sea and landscape loom around,
Till sun and moon and stars the night astound,
With living lustre leaping to the sound ;
And verdure springs, and with the breathing form
The earth and air and ocean sudden swarm ;
And last of all, to crown Creation's plan,
Awakes to life the myriad-minded man.

But, on the even of that natal day,
Love's louder song had died into the lay,
That, all too subtle sweet for mortal ears,
Thrills with eternal music through the spheres.

Orpheus alone had caught that softer strain,
And, as he wakes it now, his eager brain,
Inspired by Phœbus, links the sound subdued
To its loud, long-forgotten parent mood.

So lutes he, and so sings, with flashing eyes
And dark dishevelled locks that fall and rise
O'er his rent vesture to the cadence wild.
Eve fades—night blackens—and Apollo's child,
Unseen as Philomel, pours his passionate thought ;
Whilst round him all the universe, distraught
By the fierce frenzy of his awful lyre,
All breathing forms ; Earth, Ocean, Air and Fire,
Hear and make moan, as each indwelling essence
That forms them feels the old Creative Presence
Maddening their rest, and drawing them to mix
In other moulds, and all that is perplex.
Till at the sphere song, out of centuried sleep
Old Chaos rears her from the utmost deep,
Deeming perchance that erst obnoxious hymn
Favourable now unto her empire dim.
Then rocked the earth for fear, the vaulted heaven
Thundered aghast, far leaped the affrighted levin,
Shook the deep sea dismayed, and, at the last,
Through the song-severed gates of hell the poet passed

Hard by the hideous porch a spectral crew
Deform first meet the minstrel's anxious view ;
Grief, Labour, Care, Disease, and tristful Age
And Fear and Famine, War, Revenge and Rage ;

But shape most dread of all the demon Death,
With infant face distort, a maid beneath,
Yet with lean palsied arms and locks of eld,
Who first from far the approaching bard beheld
And fain to startle him to swift retreat,
Begins : " O fool, what strain to Death is sweet ?
Essay no further, lest this countenance
In wrath revealed consume thee at a glance.
Or canst thou, front to front opposed, outstare
Her whose fierce eyes' intolerable glare,
Spite all the horrors of her serpent brow,
And hellish aspect, laid Medusa low ! "
She said, but Orpheus struck his saddest chord,
Wept the fell fiend, and past her haunt abhorred
The youth unhurt pursued his darkling way,
Till at his feet the Stygian river lay,
And rustling round him stole those bloodless ranks
That wait expectant on the oozy banks
For Charon's bark ; but that grim senior rowed
Toward the further shore his goblin load.
Then Orpheus for Eurydice the lost
Eager pursues all that phantom host,
But vainly, when outspake a giant ghost,
Whose shoulders topped the crowd, " O comrade dear,
Orpheus divine, what quest has led thee here ?
Alive ! O strange, as first I sought this shore,
Admetus' bride, Alcestis to restore,
And with these hands, how forceless now, alas !
Fettered the Triple Hound all fear to pass.
Surely some bitter cause thy suppliant dress,
Dishevelled hair, and downcast eyes confess ? "

Then Orpheus weeping, " Ah me ! grief on grief,
No woe is single, thou too here, my chief,
Whom yesterday sang Victor ! Then she crossed
The Ninefold-Stream before thy life was lost,
For, by a serpent slain, Eurydice,
My bride is hither borne. Oh ! woe is me !
Her now I seek ; but what fate forced thee here,
Whom of old Argo's crew I loved most dear ? "

Then great Alcides tells the jealous wile
Of Deianeira by the Centaur's guile
Malignant fraught with poison pain and fire
Life-ridding on his self-sought funeral pyre.
" Conso e thee, Herakles, my comrade dear ; "
Orpheus presaged, " For short space art thou here.
It only needs to expiate the ire
Of Dis, conceived what time his hell hound dire
Thy might o'ermastered, that, as you weak ghosts,
As forceless thou awhile should'st range his coasts.
Right soon from Hell exempt, with honours meet,
Thee Gods shall welcome to a heavenly seat
Constellate in their midst, and, for the love
Of woman, bless with Hebe's bower above."

Now Charon brings his boat once more to land,
And Orpheus hastes his service to demand ;
But with a hateful scowl the ferryman
In scornful answer to his suit began :
" Back, rash intruder in the realms of dark,
For, long as I direct the Stygian bark,

No sprite embodied enters it again,"
He said ; but Orpheus woke a soothing strain,
So sweet, so softly wildering the brain,
That all his grisly length old Charon slept,
Then lightly to his seat the poet stepped,
And, singing, o'er the stream with easy oarage swept.

Stretched on the further shore the Triple Hound
Owns with a troubled voice the magic sound,
Whom Orpheus passed, and through the palace-gate
Of Hell still presses on with hope elate,
Until at last before the dusky throne
Of Dis and Proserpine he casts him down.
Whom, sternly eying, Pluto straight addressed :
" Stranger, declare thy name and what thy quest.
No Tityos sure, nor with Alcides' might
Hast thou approached the realms of Nether Night ;
My minions have been mocked with panic error,
If thou, effeminate form, hast caused them terror.
Speak, but expect no grace." Then Proserpine
Broke in, " My Lord, 'tis Orpheus, the divine,
Offspring of Phœbus and Calliope,
Who, when the Fleece-quest neared sweet Sicily,
His descant tuned, till e'en the sea-beach smiled,
To bright-eyed blossom by his song beguiled.
Then Orpheus, with fresh heart, awoke this litany wild.

" Not out of impious lust, O ! Nameless Name,
Nor friend for friend, as Herakles hither came,
Have I adventured to thine Empire dread.
No might of mine—ay, well this downcast head

And feeble limbs provoke thy sharpest scorn.
Not his poor prowess hath thy servant borne
Thus strangely past thy guardian forms of fear,
Charon and Cereberus, and set unscathed here.
A Power Eternal bears me from above—
Now, in my need, forsake me not, O Love ! "

On whom so crying bitterly a great change,
With tremor fierce and sighing thick and strange,
Smote suddenly—his labouring limbs assume
Stature divine, his front immortal bloom ;
Erect he starts, a sudden halo bright
Burns from his brow, beneath whose living light
His eyes, bright stars in bluest heaven, shed
Ethereal influence through that palace dread,
Whilst his sweet voice divine rings forth amongst the dead,
Singing the lives of those two lovers fond,
How dutiful in youth, then how beyond
Compare in piety ; and how they loved
A long, long love, that but the purer proved
By bitter ordeal ; their brief nuptial bliss
And latest parting ; last the envenomed kiss
Of the fierce serpent, when with flying foot
Scarce had Eurydice foiled the vile pursuit
Of Aristæus, and how she failed and fell
And made her death-bed in the asphodel.

Here paused the voice awhile, but soon again
Awaking, poured a most enchanting strain

Of a fair goddess in Sicilian meads,
And Eros charioting those dusky steeds
Soft o'er the lily leaves and grasses green,
And to the King of Night bearing his beauteous Queen.

Last the voice sang how that deep love divine
Had never quenched in Dis or Proserpine,
Or failed in anywise of Eros' aid,
For which dear services that sweet voice prayed
Eurydice's reprieve with its last breath,
Then on the darkness died a most delicious death.

The bold song ceased ; but, ere its echo died,
Pluto repents him, and to Minos cried :
" Eurydice is free, 'tis thine to fix
The law that leads the lovers o'er the Styx
Unto the Upper Light ! " Whose stern decree
Bids Orpheus lead his dear Eurydice,
But not to turn, nor look upon his love,
Till they have safely reached the realms above.

Then forth they fare, the living and the dead ;
He first, she following with painful tread ;
Till every peril passed and ghostly dread,
Upon the very threshold of the day,
Fearful lest that dear shape had gone astray,
Orpheus looks back. O, fool ! for close behind
His love still followed with a faithful mind ;
But scarce had turned him, when that well-known form,
Half-spectre still, yet momently more warm

With waking life, dissolves with shrill despair
And looks of anguish on the nether air.
Rose as she sank a universal knell,
And leaped together the loud gates of hell.

Seven days and nights he strives, but strives in vain,
Once more to wake that elemental strain,
Nourished the while on nought but tearful sorrow;
But with the eighth inexorable morrow
He sadly rose, one look of longing cast
On Tænarus, and sighing Thraceward passed.
And three long years, amidst the lost one's bowers,
Wandered, wild warbling to her favourite flowers
Laments more melancholy sweet than ever
Echo had answered by the Hebrus' river.

Thus on Eurydice his constant thought
Still fixed, no solace of fresh love he sought;
Till as he sleeps outworn within that wood
Whence she whilere had flown towards the flood,
Exasperate each at Orpheus' slights of love,
A Mænad troop steal on him through the grove,
Of whom one snatches swiftly from the ground
His lute, low-shivering with ill-omened sound.
"Io," exultant! "Io!" through the brakes
The Bacchants shout, and shuddering Orpheus wakes,
But helpless quite, as of his lyre forlorn,
By the wild women limb from limb is torn.
"Eurydice!" the passing spirit cries;
"Eurydice!" the troubled vale replies;
"Eurydice!" afar, each snowy summit sighs.

For a minute or more we sat holding our breath
In our Shenachus circle, as silent as death ;
Till a colleen cried out " Ah, why wouldn't he wait
Till he'd passed the poor dear through that pitiless gate,
Before he looked back and so lost her sweet life ?
Behaving as badly, all out, as Lot's wife,
And deserving, as well, for his desperate fault,
To be struck where he stood to a statue of salt ! "
" Tut, tut, my dear girl," answered sly Shiel O'Farrell ;
To The Black Powers alone he gave ause for a quarrel—
Or, to make the distinction a notion more nice,
He looked back upon Virtue, but she upon Vice ;
And besides to his sweetheart he proved himself true,
Till his death at the hands of that Bacchanal crew.
May young poet McArt there preserve his limbs sound,
For I'm told some wild women are running around,
So bitterly bent upon making our Laws
That Prime Ministers, even, ar'n't safe from their claws."
" Now, now, Shiel O'Farrell," An Creeveen spoke out,
" By our Gaelic League law, which you've studied no doubt,
I protest that you've crossed the Political Border,
And, therefore, must rule you as clean out of order.
But instead of a proper pecuniary fine,
If the Sex you impugn to support me incline,
I pronounce that you purge yourself clear of your crime
By relating some countryside story in rhyme,
For a packfull you've got, 'tis well known, of the best !
By your wonderful fiddle charmed out of the West."
And the ladies all clapped to acclaim his behest.
So the Doctor breathed deep till he'd filled up his chest,
To the Chair and the Fair bowed long and bowed low,
Then took up his tale of The Colleen na Mbo.

THE GIRL WITH THE COWS

O the happiest orphan that ever was seen
Was Nora Maguire at the age of eighteen ;
Her father and mother both died at her birth,
So grief for their sakes didn't trouble her mirth.
Nora Maguire was the flower of girls
Wid her laughin' blue eye and her sunny bright curls,
Wid her mouth's merry dimple, her head's purty poise,
And a foot that played puck right and left wid the boys ;
Yes ! her looks were a fortun' ; yet curious to tell
Sweet Nora Maguire was an heiress as well,
For her father had left his dear child at his death
Half a hundred of cows at the side of the heath ;
Where Nora na Mo in a handsome slate house
Wid her granny looked after the sheep and the cows ;
For, behind all the fun that her features evince,
Mistress Nora Maguire has lashins of sinse ;
But though Nora was careful she never was mean,
But, dear as the dew to the hot summer plain,
She'd go stealin' the poor and the sick to relieve,
Unbeknownst in the hush of the dawn or the eve ;
And no girl in the service at chapel took part
Who followed the priest wid a faithfuller heart,
And no sound in the anthem rose truer and higher
Than the fresh, fervent voice of sweet Nora Maguire.
But that didn't make darlin' Nora desire
To adjourn to the convent on lavin' the choir—
No ! It's thinkin' I am, where's the use to conceal
Her first thought after chapel was Patrick O'Neale,
Wid his dark handsome looks, and his deep earnest voice,
The pet of the colleens—the pride of the boys.

For there wasn't a boy in Dunkerron was able
To dance on the ground as he could on the table;
Or sing in ould Irish wid beautif'ller shakes
Sweeter songs or laments at our weddings and wakes;
Or tell by the fire of a dark winter's night
Tales that crowded us closer together for fright.
And where's the turf cuttin' or boghole so broad,
But he'd clear like a hare hoppin' off of the road?
At what fence would he falter or alter his steps,
And who could approach him at throwin' three leaps?
And on Sunday at hurley, who rooshed on the ball
Wid such fury as Pat through the thick of them all—
Or, when it came buzzin' like a bee through the air,
Caught it cleaner, and pucked it as strong or as fair?

But for all these distractions the boy wasn't spoilt,
And no honest poor Irishman ever has toiled
For the wife and the childer wid heartier zeal
Than did Pat for his mother, good Widow O'Neale;
For his father—God rest him!—had drooped down and
died
When the praties turned black through the whole country
side;
And soon after his uncle Cornelius, I've heard,
From New York to his brother and sister sent word,
That the passage of both he was wishful to pay,
And they'd find a new home on his side of the say.
So they went—wid their poor mother's blessin' and tears,
Micky, twelve, but a stout little lad for his years,
And Honora, the darlin' sweet child of eleven,
All alone—but in safety wid the blessing of heaven.

Now Widow O'Neale, the brave woman, had once
For a twelvemonth been novice and lived with the nuns,
Though when that was out—I've no time for the tale—
She took Patrick's father, instead of the veil!
Well, for nun and for novice, there's time and to spare
For the needle and thread from devotion and prayer—
And that time was well spent by the Colleen who now
Has no cause to repent her novitiate vow;
For though many's the night she's gone fastin' to bed,
Little Patrick to treat to some meat or some bread,
Though it's many's the beautiful sunshiny day
She's sewed herself blind for his schoolin' to pay,
Still an' all, sure, she managed to struggle along,
Till her Patrick, now growin' up hearty and strong,
Came home from the haggard one night in July,
Shoutin', "Mother, mavrone, bid your needle good-bye!
I'm to have a man's wages on the master's estate,
And help teach at the night school—Mother, isn't it
great!"

So, when the spuds whitened in the gardens again
Young Patrick O'Neale, now the pride of the men,
Foot to foot down the ridge wid O'Flaherty pressed,
Who of all pratee-diggers was counted the best;
And after inspectin' the mowers at work
In his glebe on the hill, Parson Fetherston Bourke,
"Why, Patrick O'Neale, boy," said he, wid a laugh,
"Why, Patrick, you're worth any man and a half—
For your clane, cliver coorse wid your scythe through the
grass
Was a picture, more power to you, Patrick, it was."

And yourselves would be pleased to have heard him at night
In the master's new school-house, so smart and polite,
Explainin' the earth's longitudinal plan
To a wild-headed stump of a mountainy man,
Or settin' a sum in Algebbra, begor,
To the priest's crabbed nephew and one or two more.

But when it struck ten by the clock overhead,
"Good night" to the boys our young schoolmaster said;
Gathered up "the Six Books" and the slates for the night,
Locked the door and made off, wid a screech of delight,
Through the deep mountain gloom to the darlin' red star
Of his mother's turf fire winkin' welcome from far.
Five minutes—no more—you allowed to that mile,
Then into the cabin you'd swing through the stile,
Catch and kiss the good widdy wid a wonderful smack
Before she well knew that her boyo was back.
Then down to the milk and the murphies you'd sit,
While the dog wagged his tail and looked up for a bit,
And the thief of a cat on the table sprang up,
Knowin' well you could never refuse her a sup;
For the proverb runs true—to my thinkin', at laste—
"That man's a good man that's the friend of the baste."

Well, I've hinted that even as home through the grass
Mistress Nora went trippin' direct out of Mass,
Across the girl's mind there'd be sure for to steal
Some notion or other of Patrick O'Neale.

Now wasn't that strange, for though sweethearts for ever,
Yerra ! yes, though the best of the boys on The River,
From the Captain commandin' the Bay wid his cutter
To the proudest on shore, they were all in a flutter.
Though a huckster might furnish three iligant stalls
Wid the brooches and bonnets, the dresses and shawls
That the cleverest courters from far and from near
Had given her, galore, at each fair in the year ;
Though none who'd not seen it could have any iday
Of the spring trout and salmon they sent her on
Friday ;
Though they put her the question in every way out—
In poems so romantic or merely by mout',
In English and Irish—and as I've heard tell,
One bould hedge-schoolmaster in Latin as well—
And though, which you'll count the most curious of all,
Not a look nor a word had he ever let fall
That could lave her the laste right in raison to feel
She'd put the comether on Patrick O'Neale—
P'r'aps now 'twas jealousy vexed her to-day,
To see Patrick funnin' wid Fanny O'Shea,
Or to meet him to-morrow, the full of his cap
Of purple whorts pourin' in Mary Moore's lap ;
While his manners to her were so courtly and grand,
Holdin' out on the crops wid his hat in his hand,
Or discussin' her cows wid a dignity such as
A Prince of the Blood would employ to a Duchess ;
Or perhaps 'twas the pride, that wid Nora was high—
That of all who were soft on her sorra a boy,
For looks or for manners could match wid O'Neale—
And yet his the one heart that the girl couldn't steal.

But whativer the raison—begannies—'twas so
When the county came courtin' the Colleen na Mbo,
Her thoughts they kept runnin', surprisin' to say,
Most of all on the man that was laste in her way.

But all you sweet girls who attend to my tale,
Lest by this you think coldly of Patrick O'Neale,
Faith, I'm forced to confess—that when Nora believed
Patrick's heart was his own, sure herself was deceived—
For, of all of her suitors so rich and so high,
None loved her as deep as that poor pisant boy.

But why hadn't he courage his heart to declare,
And to up wid his story and axe her to share
His fortune for ever? I answer you, sure,
"'Twas the pride that prevented him, being so poor!"
Yes! that was the cause why, at bonfire or patron,
When the rest all came round complimentin', and flatter'n',
To her friendly "Good day," "Good day kindly, to you!"
Was your only remark to her all the dance through.
And that was the raison, one night at Adair's,
When after a jig—through the scarceness of chairs—
The girls should sit down on the knees of the men,
Till such time as the music should start up again;
Each girl wid her partner and Nora wid you,
You must preten' your seat wasn't equal to two,
And sit down on the floor—wid her planked up behind;
Though I know well which seat had been most to her mind.

But when quite out of hearing, unseen and alone,
To himself he'd go over each look and each tone
Of Nora's he'd treasured away in his mind,
At some moment she'd fretted to think him unkind ;
And as he went clippin' the briar wid his bill,
Or rowed up the river, or reaped on the hill,
Some fancy of Nora would come to him still.
The arbutus fruit now, or a stretch of the sky
Would recall her red lip or her laughin' blue eye,
The heath flower to-day of her blushes would hint,
And to-morrow the furze took her tresses' own tint—
The spring leaped with her laugh over pebbles of pearl,
And the sailing swan signed him his white-bosomed girl !
While " Nora" for ever his oar on the bay,
And " Nora " his spade in the garden used say,
And " Nora " still " Nora," to the tunes she loved best,
His heart it kept beating the time in his breast.

So that pair of young people their feelings used smother,
Widout each thinkin' either could care for the other.

But the rude blow at last will afford you a hint
Of the fire that's concealed in the core of the flint ;
And the beautiful brim that's unnoticed by day,
On the gloomiest night glitters most on the say,
And so even its secretest feeling'll start
In the hour of distress from the haughtiest heart.

And 'twas so with these two.
Now the mornin' was fair,
Wid the mountains distinct from Dunloe to Kenmare.

But at noon the white cloud Carn Tual had kissed,
And soon after The Saw melted off in the mist ;
And lower, still lower the mist it crep' down,
Till its curtain had covered up Atthin and Beown ;
And lower, still lower it swept for the plain,
While you heard Bullig breaker start roarin' for rain.

'Twas a Saturday, surely, wid only the Sunday
Betune it and The Fair on the following Monday.
And, signs by, down each dark boreen, then, for ever,
And from out every fog-steamin' ford on the river
Cows and sheep they came startin', till the roads were alive,
For the world like a swarm of bees smoked from a hive.

Well ! that very same Saturday, long before even
The lark mounted up wid his matins to heaven,
O'Neale had been facin', as if it was day,
Surely, but sad, up the mountainy way
Back out of Glen Caragh, where he'd had a call
To his mother's own brother's son's funeral.
Surely, but sad, you may think, at the start,
Till the light of the sun began warmin' his heart ;
And yerra, ye'll not think the worse of the boy,
If I tell you, before every dew-drop was dry,
His tears for the cousin no longer used fall ;
And ye won't blame him much, if ye blame him at all,
When I'm forced to confess that at noon upon Gloragh
His thoughts they had turned round completely to Nora ;
Till sure an' he shocked himself singin' a song
Of the Colleen na Mbo as he travelled along.

So he trassed away dreamin' of Nora na Mbo,
While the mist it crep' down to the valleys below,
Unknownst to O'Neale ; for each inch of the way
He'd have travelled as surely by night as by day.
Still an' all, at long last, on the edge of a bog
There puffed in his face such a powderin' fog
That he gave a great start and looked doubtin'ly down
To be sure he'd made off the right track to the town ;
And he just then could see to the left of his path,
Roundin' out of the vapour, the ould Irish Rath,
And says he wid a smile, " Why I might be a hound,
For facin' so fair for the Barony's bound,
But I'd best hurry on, then, or Mother machree,
It's in dread for me out in the mist that you'll be."

So he started to run, when he heard from above
The voice of the girl that had stolen his love ;
" Magrina, magrina, magrinashin oge,
Come hither, my Laidir, come Kitty, you rogue,
Come up, Blackbird, come, Snow, to the beautiful house ! "
" 'Tis the Colleen na Mbo," he said, " callin' her cows."
But her voice sounded sadly and strange in his ear,
And the heart of O'Neale began knockin' for fear,
And he looked and he saw risin' up from below,
The Shadow of the Shape of the Colleen na Mbo
Growin' greater for ever, till a Monster of Black,
Like the Spirit of Death, it stood out of the track ;
And O'Neale knew the warnin', and shouted " Stand back,
Stand back for your life ! " but the Shadow went still,
Wid its arms wavin' wild on the brow of the hill,
Then it trembled, and balanced, and staggered, and fell,
Down, down, wid the moan of a muffled death-bell.

And as a man held by a horrible dream
Wrastles hard, till at last he starts up wid a scream—
So he stood there, how long himself never could tell—
For the mist of a sudden seemed changed by a spell
To a fierce Fiend that caught him unknownst from behind,
And held him hard breathin', and his eyes startin' blind,
Wid cruel white hands knotted into his neck,
And a hiss in his ears like a poisonous snake—
Till he wakes up at last wid a terrible groan
And finds himself there on the mountain alone
Wid the white mist around driftin' dreamily on.
" And was it a dream, after all, then ? " he cried,
When a sheep-dog it ran barkin' up to his side ;
And the dread it returned at the voice of the dog,
And he stooped down and looked at it into the fog,
And he knew it was Nora's, and his heart it stood still.
" Now, what are you doin', Jack, here on the hill ?
Where's your Nora, mavrone ? " and the dog in reply
Starts whinin' and draggin' away at the boy.
And he knew it had answered as plain as if spoke ;
And says he, " Jack, I'm wid you, though my heart it is
broke."
So, layin' a sorrowful hand on its head,
The poor boy went after—the dumb creature led
From Drumtine to Coomassig, as still as the dead.
Here the dog was at fault, but soon wid a bound
Followed on a fresh foot-print, his nose to the ground,
And Patrick looked closer and strained through the dark,
And knew it was Nora's by the straight slender mark.
And he stooped down and kissed it, and Jack he stood still
On the top of Coomassig and barked wid a will ;

And " Nora," Pat shouted, " O, Nora na Mbo,
Is it clifted you are on the mountain below !
O answer, acushla." But sorra a word
But only the voice of an eagle he heard
Wheelin' in through the terrible darkness beneath,
And he shuddered and sobbed, " It comes scentin' her
death,
And not as much light as to stone it away,
O, God, that the darkness would turn into day ! "

" Come, Jack, we'll go down to the foot of the rock
And protect the poor corpse from the ravenous flock,"
And he coaxed him to come, but the dog wouldn't stir,
So alone down the cliff Pat went searching for her ;
But as he was going, a far hullahoo
Rose out of the distance, and into his view
Red torches came wavin' their way up the hill,
And he laughed a wild laugh through his wanderin' will,
And he cried : " Is it wake-lights yez are drawin' near ?
Hurry up, then, and show me the corpse of my dear."
And the red lights approached, and a voice wid the light,
" Who are ye in distress on the mountain to-night ? "
And he answered : " Come up, for our name it is Death,
Wid the eagle above and the white worm beneath ;
But the death-lights that hover by night o'er the grave
Will restore us our dead when your torches can save."

" What is it, O'Neale, man ? How wildly you rave,"
And the hand of Murt Shea, the best friend that he had,
Was lovingly laid on the arm of the lad.

" O, Murt, give me hould of that splinter," he said,
" And let me look down on the face of the dead,
For Nora Maguire, Murt, my own secret love,
Has fallen from the clift of Coomassig above."
" Is it she, wirra, wirra ! the pride of us all ?
Do you say that the darlin's been killed by a fall ?
Ologone, my poor Pat, and you loved her at heart."
Then O'Neale groaned again, " Sure I've searched every part,
And no sign of her here at the foot of the clift."
And the rest they came up, and the bushes they sift,
But sorra a trace to the right or the left.

Then O'Neale shouted, " Come, every man of ye lift
His fire altogether." And one said, " I see
Somethin' hangin' up high from the juniper tree."
" 'Tis herself," shouted Pat, wid his hand to his brow,
" How far from the top is that juniper bough ? "
" Ten foot of a fall," said a mountain gossoon,
" Wid no tussocks betune them ? "
" Wid nothin' betune."
" Have yez e'er a rope handy, boys ? "
" Divle a rope !
And not nearer nor Sneem for the likes you could hope."
" Come hither, gossoon, and be off wid this splinter,
For 'tis you know the mountain ; away widout hinder
To the nearest good haggard, and strip the sugane,
Not forgettin' a sop of the freshest finane.
Brustig, brustig, alanah ! " and hardly the rest
Had followed O'Neale up the vapoury crest,

To the spot that the faithful, wise hound wouldn't pass,
When the boy he was back wid the hayropes and grass.
Then, says Pat, leanin' down wid a splinter of light,
"God bless the good dog—after all he was right.
Ten foot underneath us—she's plainly in sight.
Now give hither the ropes, and hould on while I twist."
So he caught the suganes up like threads in his fist,
And twined them and jined them a thirty foot length,
Four plait to a thickness of terrible strength,
Then roped it around the two biggest boys there,
To see was it fit for supportin' a pair.
And he easily lifted the two through the air,
Up and down, till he'd proved it well able to bear.
"Now make the rope fast to me, boys, while I go
Down the side of the clift for the Colleen na Mbo.
Livin' or dead; yet I'm hopeful, for all,
There's life in her still, tho' she's kilt from the fall."

Then he turns to one side, and he whispers Murt Shea,
"If I'm killed from the clift of Coomassig to-day,
Come promise me faithful you'll stand to the mother
Like a son, till she's help from the sister and brother.
And give her this kiss, and I'll meet her again
In the place where's no poverty, sorrow or pain."
And he promised—and all they shook hands wid O'Neale,
And he cheered them, and said, "Have no dread that we'll fail,
For I'd not be afeard, why, to balance the Pope
Himself from the clift by so hearty a rope."

So a torch in his hand and a stick in his teeth,
And his coat round his throat, the boys lowered him beneath.

And all but Murt Shea, then, they couldn't make out
The coat round his throat, and the stick in his mout'.

But it wasn't for long they'd the doubt in their mind,
For they saw his torch quenched wid a noise like the wind,
And " steady above ! " came his voice from below,
Then heavy wings flapped wid a scream and a blow.
" 'Tis the eagles " they cried, " at the Colleen na Mbo."
But an old man amongst them spoke up, and he said,
" 'Tis the eagles for sartin, but not at the dead,
For they'll not touch the corpse—murther, but for the mist,
'Tis I could have told you that this was their nest.
It's O'Neale that they're at—pull him back, or they'll tear
The poor boy to pieces below in the air."
And they shouted together the eagles to scare,
And they called to O'Neale from the edge of the height :
" She's dead, Pat, she's dead, never mind her to-night,
But come back, or the eagles 'll pick out your sight."
And they made for to pull ; but he cries, " If you do
I give you my oath that I'll cut the rope through."
And they b'lieved him, and waited wid hearts beatin' loud,
Screechin' down at the birds through the vapoury cloud,
Showerin' splinters for ever to give the boy light,
And warnin' him watch to the left or the right,
As each eagle in turn it would fly at his head !
Till he dropped one below in the darkness for dead,
And the other flew off wid a yell through the night.

Then they felt the rope slacken as he crossed to the bough,
Then tighten again—and he called to them " Now ! "
And they knew that the dangerous moment was come.
So wid wrist draggin' shoulder, tight finger to thumb,
And tooth crushing tooth in the silence of death,
They drew up the two from the blackness beneath.

There'd been a long stretch of delightful spring weather
But this was the day beat the rest altogether,
Over mountain and valley and river—Oyeh !
There was never for ever so darlin' a day—
Wid its purty, pale primroses shrinkin' so shy
From the bachelor butterfly's kiss-and-go-by,
And wid hawthorns, like bridesmaids come out in the air,
Arrangin' white wreaths in their iligant hair.
And so thought a fiddler, fiddle on back,
Steppin' for town by the mountainy track.
" But," says he, " what's the raison the people are dressed,
All wid shoes on their feet, in their holiday best ?
Tisn't Sunday, then—barrin' the priests were astray,
Ere yesterday mornin' off out at Rossbeigh ;
And a Saint's Day it's not, for I know them by heart,
The whole box an' dice they observe in this part.
Must be, then, begorra, I make no mistake,
In concludin' it's either a weddin' or wake ;
Though I shouldn't have thought the worst omadhaun round
'D have chosen such weather for goin' underground."

When who should come hurryin' down the boreen
But Honor O'Connor dressed out like a queen,

Wid her hair in one wonderful plait, and upon it—
Like the bird on its nest—a sweet bit of a bonnet—
And a green sash that showed her fine figure for'nint,
And, flouncin' behind her, the beautif'liest print
Folded into her hand, just enough for a hint
Of as tidy an ankle as ever set step.
So the girl she came on, wid the laugh on her lip,
Till she sighted the fiddler, and " Shiel, dear," said she ;
(For I should have remarked that the fiddler was me)
" What a stranger you are—tho' returnin' aright,
For we've terrible want of your fiddle to-night ; "
" But what wonderful doin's are goin' on below,
Honor, acora ? "

" Ah ! nonsense ! You know,
Why Nora Maguire's to be married to-day."
" Glory be to God !—Is it true what you say ?
Well, Nora na Mbo, but I'm wishin' you joy ;
And who in the name of good fortune's the boy ? "
" Arrah who should it be, then, but Mr. O'Neale ?
But you're bothered, I see." So she up wid the tale
Of the Colleen na Mbo that I've told to yez all,
Explainin' how Nora wasn't kilt by the fall,
Though she took the brain fever immediate on that—
And how she wint ravin' for ever on Pat,
And her love, and the pity the boy was so poor—
And how hopeful from this of performing her cure,
Good Dr. O'Kydd, ere the crisis came on,
Goes off to consider wid ould Father John—
And how the two wint wid one mind to the Squire
To tell him the danger of Nora Maguire ;

And the master, said he, " I've my eye on the lad,
And I want a sub-agent. He'll suit me bedad—
I'll send for him up to the Castle to-day."
And he got no refusal from Pat, you may say.
And how the good doctor told Nora the night
When the crisis was on her—by accident quite—
About Patrick. Then how a great longin' for life,
And maybe the notion she'd yet be his wife
Came over the girl—and the terrible flood
Of the fever subsided away from her blood ;
And tho' yerrah so wasted—to see her you'd cry—
In a month she was up, and, av coorse, Patrick by ;
And concludin' how hardly the winter was out,
When thro' all of Dunkerron 'twas rumoured about,
Norah'd taken O'Neale, and there wasn't a doubt
When the good priest he published them three weeks ago,
And to-day they'll be married in the Chapel below.

Then the marriage-bell started as Honor and I
Stepped into the town wid our hearts full of joy ;
So off we two darted, and just at the porch
Met Nora, the darlin', drivin' up to the Church,
And Pat, you may guess, wasn't long in the lurch.
And a power of company surely were there,
Of the highest and lowest all down from Kenmare,
For the Squire and the quality seated around
Side by side wid the lowliest pisant you found.
And the whole string of sweethearts who'd courted in vain
(For not a man of them would give Nora pain
By seemin' heartbroken or wishful to slight
Her choice of O'Neale) had agreed to unite

To see the girl's weddin'—and surely for this too,
Whin ould Father John had them married and blessed too,
They each had her thanks—Yerra yes ! and a kiss too.
And somehow myself was mixed up wid that lot,
And stole the best kiss that I ever yet got.
" Arrah ! Shiel, is it you ? Why, none of us knew
Yourself was a sweetheart of Nora here, too."
" Was it Shiel, why, that kissed me ? " " 'Twas so then, bedad ;
Hould his hands for me, Murphy," " Now would you, my lad ? "
" Mercy, Nora, and whisper ! 'Twas just in advance
That I took it—for playin' to-night at your dance."

" Areesh ! Shiel O'Farrell ! more power to your tongue !
Your tale was well told, as your songs are well sung.
And ' The Colleen na Mbo ' would provide a prime play
For the New Irish Theatre over the way,
If you'd cast it to suit them."
" Indeed, so I may,
But who'd furnish my eagles ? "
" Your eagles ? "
" Yes ! who ? "
" The Head Keeper, why not ? of the Phœnix Park Zoo
'Twould take careful rehearsal to perfect them, p'r'aps,
But I'd not put it past some stage-managing chaps."
" And if the Park breed were too wicked or wild ? "
" There's the æroplane sort which I'd trust with a child.

And they tell me that one of our Branch, by name Nagle,
Scares the birds from his crops with an 'æroplane aigle.'
When the harvest is over, he'll hire it you, certain!"

"Will you whisht with your codding now, Councillor Curtain!
And since our talk's took such a frivolous turn,
I'll call upon Parson George Hannay O'Byrne
To steady us down with an old world romance!"
Well! the Parson looked up with a comical glance,
And lifted his gold-mounted specs from his brow,
With "An Creeveen, at once to your wishes I bow,
And this old Tale of Truth, I may say at the start,
Is concerned with the forebears of Mr. McArt."

THE FAIRY BRANCH

It chanced upon a time, a magic time,
That Cormac, son of Art, arch-king of Erin,
Strode, musing, from his dun in Liathdrum
When lo! a noble youth upon the green,
And in his hand a glittering fairy branch
With nine bright apples of red gold thereon.

This was, indeed, the wonder-working bough,
That whoso shook, men wounded unto death
And women travail-tortured sank to sleep,

Soothed by the low, delicious lullaby
Those golden apples uttered. Nay, no want,
No woe, no weariness endures on earth
That swiftly stabs or slowly wastes the soul,
But this sweet branch, once shaken, wholly hides
In soft oblivion.

Therefore, spake the king,
"Declare thy coming! Is that branch thine own?"
"Yea, Sire," the youth replied. "Would'st part with it?"
"Aye truly would I, so I won its worth."
"What is the price thou askest?" "The award
Of mine own mouth." "'Tis thine, yet name it me."
"Then, king, I claim thy wife, thy son, thy daughter,
Chaste Eithne, gallant Cairbre, winsome Ailbhe."
"Great was the price upon thy fairy branch;
Yet, for I pledged to thee thy mouth's award,
I fain must grant it all."

Therewith the youth
Resigned the magic bough to Cormac's care,
And this the monarch bore within his dun
To Eithne, and to Cairbre, and to Ailbhe.

"A beauteous treasure hast thou brought us, father,"
Cried Ailbhe straight. "Small wonder," sighed the king,
"Seeing it cost so dear." "What gave you for it?"
"Thy brother, mother, and thyself, O Ailbhe."
"That price were piteous, if thy words be true,"
Said Eithne; "for we trust that all the earth
Contains no treasure thou would'st change us for."
"Alas! I plight you all my kingly word
That I have given you for this Fairy Bough,"

King Cormac answered weeping, and declared
The coming of the Bearer of the Branch.
Now when they proved the bitter tidings true,
Queen Eithne searched the sorrow-smitten face
Of Cormac, and for pity held her peace;
And Cairbre took her hand in his and spake not;
But Ailbhe snatched a gleaming knife, and shore
Close to her head her bright, abundant hair,
With "Father, often hast thou called these curls
Thy golden-branching joy—thus, thus they fall
Before the branch of gold that masters them."

Then dark distress obscured the eyes of all,
And broke in bitter rain upon their cheeks,
And choked the cheerful family of words
With grievous sighs and great heart-bursting groans,
Till Cormac caught the wonder-working bough
And shook it softly o'er them, and forthwith,
Soothed by the low, delicious lullaby
Those golden apples uttered, they forgot
What ill had happ'd them, and arose and went
With smiles to meet the Bearer of the Branch;
Howbeit with tears King Cormac strode before.
When, lo, the youth! Then Cormac: "See thy price,
The heavy price I pledged thee for this branch."
"Well hast thou kept thy promise; wherefore take
A blessing for thy truth's sake; aye, a blessing
Shall win thee victory." Thus they went their way—
The youth and his companions glad at heart:
The other wifeless, childless, full of woe.

Now on the morrow, when that mournful news
Was noised abroad through Erin, loud laments
Arose from all the land, but in Teamhair
The loudest, from the princes round the throne
To lowliest labourer in the royal fields;
So dear beloved was Eithne for her wealth
Of queenly wit and wisdom—dearer still
For constant deeds of thoughtfullest charity;
So dear beloved was Cairbre for his might
Of manly youth, not lightly roused to wrath,
Yet swift and sure to succour the oppressed;
So dear beloved was Ailbhe for her dower
Of artless beauty and her voice of song,
That held the blackbirds hushed in Derrycarn.

These, therefore, all the land with many tears
Bewailing wept; and tho' their monarch yearned
To share with them his sorrow, ne'ertheless
In pity for his people, once again
He raised the fairy branch of glittering gold
And shook it in their midst, and so subdued
Their grief with glamour till they smiled again.

Yet Cormac's grief possessed him more and more,
Seeing he mourned alone; and though in court
He ever kept a seeming cheerful face,
Nor lived less instant in his daily round
Of royal duty: yet the thoughtful days
Of law and chess and judgment lightest lay
Upon his suffering spirit. Heavily went
The weekly wassail; sadly shone the dawns

Of race and chase, tho' bright to all beside.
But darkest gloomed the long, lone day of love;
For then within his palace, without food,
He mused, a mournful man; or wandering
From chamber on to chamber, smote
His bosom at the silent spinning wheel,
The stringless harp, or touched with trembling hand
The empty torque of gold, the empty fails
That last had clasped the lovely neck and arms,
The round white neck and snowy dimpled arms
Of Eithne; or with heavy foot awoke
A groan from Cairbre's armour on the wall—
A groan his sonless heart gave deeply back;
Or in the distance heard some damsel singing
A favourite song of Ailbhe's and drew forth
Her golden hair and bathed it in his tears.

At last the king's high-ollamh thus began:
"O Cormac, son of Art and son of Conn
The hundred-battled, let our souls declare
What long hath lain a burthen on our peace.
We see thee seeming cheerful on the days
Of weekly wassail, chess, and race and chase,
Yet to the careful eye concealing grief:
We mark thee on the morns of law and judgment
Discreetly question and deliberate weave
Thy ordered thoughts in well-knit weighty speech,
Yet miss thee, as of old, on thy discourses
Broidering the opal flowers of eloquence,
Or flashing through them, to the listener's joy,
The diamond ray of reason-dazzling wit.

Nay, when that suitor seeking penalty
Exceeding great for satire on himself
So bitter true, that when big-bellied, bald
With blunder-breeding tongue, he raging rose
Before the Brehon who rehearsed the rann,
A shout of long, side-shaking laughter broke
From all the young at once, till here and there
Flashing a furious glance, the satirised
Retreated with his paunch toward thee, king,
Yet careless of his trailing scabbard, tripped,
And backward staggering with blind hands in air
Caught the chief cook by his long, foxy beard
Behind the door, and fistful of red hair
Plumped howling on the pavement. Then ourselves,
The elders, might no more restrain the mirth
That swelled our cheeks to bursting. Out it blew
In bass so brazen or such bleating treble
All laughed the louder save thyself alone,
Only one smile, one faintly flickering smile
Of dim December sunshine lit thy lips.
Now in the name of all thy loving people,
Princes and Lords and Commons, I am come
Beseeching thee that I may take the Branch
And shake it o'er thy head and so subdue
Thy grief with glamour, that the memory
Of all thine evil loss may from thy mind
Fade utterly, and again thou may'st arise
And take to wife the fairest, purest Princess
Wide-bordered Erin boasts, and sow anew
Seed-royal that shall richly around thee rise—
Thy manhood's hope, thy flowering fence of age."

Yet Cormac yielded not his people's prayer,
But root-fast in his barren grief endured,
Until the leaden pacing year revolved
To the dark day that left him desolate.
Then he arose and thrust the Fairy Branch
Into his bosom and went forth alone
To that sad region where his Three had left him;
When straight a magic mist gathered and gloomed,
Nor melted, till there smote upon his ear
The sound of manly voices sweetly singing
To harp and tympan touched with tuneful skill.
And look, a noble company of youths
With five slain harts and fifty wearied hounds
Beneath a mighty hunting-booth carousing
Upon the mountain. These with gracious greeting
Rising received him, and their chief approached,
And in an hospitable hand took his,
And led him to the seat of utmost honour
Beside him, and besought him to partake
Their banquet, ever host-like urging him
To each its choicest dainties. But the soul
Of Cormac craved no meats, tho' much he praised them,
And ever guest-like feigned an unfelt hunger:
Yet as they spake and jested, and sang and harped,
Scarce tasting food, he quaffed the circling cup,
Red with the grape and sweet with heather honey,
Until his heart grew merry and he forgot
The Fairy Branch; then swift his host put forth
A secret hand to where it shook and sparkled
Within his bosom, when lo! the three gold apples
That hung the lowest of the nine rang forth

A tuneless warning, and the monarch caught
The robber's wrist, and wrung the bough therefrom,
And shook it o'er him and his company,
And forthwith they fell grovelling to the ground
In the similitude of filthy swine;
And Cormac knew that he had scarce escaped
The Cup of Cursing, that of the face of man
Stamped with God's image makes a bestial front,
And of the mouth, wherefrom His prayer and praise
Should chiefly flow—a monster's ravening maw.

Again a mist of magic gathering gloomed
Around the king, nor passed from off his path
Until the moon of harvest thrilled it through
With golden glimmering glory, and he was 'ware
Of one apparelled as a princess, crouched
Wild weeping on the earth, her reckless hands
Rending her radiant hair. And Cormac's heart
Was melted, and he asked her of her grief.
Then with bowed head she poured a lamentation
Of her young lover fallen in fight.
And Cormac met her woe with words of solace
And she took comfort and turned to him a face
Whiter than any swan upon the wave—
A form of fairer fashion. Then the king
Looked closelier at her, and with wonder viewed
Her yellow curls, clustering like rings of gold
Around her waist, and marked her tearful eyes
Dart through their dusky fringes a dewy beam
Bluer than ever evening's weeping star
Shed through the curtain of a summer's cloud:

When suddenly she opened them full on him
With wistful gaze, and as she looked a blush
Took her pale visage, while her slender hand
Stole throbbing into his. A mighty spell
Possessed his soul, and nearer still and nearer
He drew her, till he breathed her red lips' balm
And passionately had pressed them to his own—
When lo! the midmost row of apples rang
The warning of the Branch, and in his breast
He caught the woman's thievish hand upon it,
And wrung it from her grasp, and o'er her head
Shook it, and of a sudden her soft white palm
Shrivelled, her lovely apple blossom cheeks
Withered away, her eyes of heavenly blue
Grew blear and evil, all her swan-like shape
Dwindled and shrank; till at the last there writhed
Whining before him a little crook-back witch.

Once more the magic mist obscured his course,
Nor passed until the sun, with purple beam
Piercing its cloud, displayed a goodly group
Of sages seated, all with eager speech
In such dispute, none knew or seemed to know
Cormac had joined him to their company,
Until an end was made to their discourse
Sophistical of Love and Life and Death.
Then with a courteous welcome they inquired
His mind upon their thoughts, and led him on,
Lauding his judgment, gravely to propound
And keenly argue; till at last he grew
So soul-enamoured of their sophistries

That when the sage in chief with flattering tongue
Besought him bide with them continually—
Such need, such heavy need, had they of one
In wit so shrewd, in eloquence so lofty—
He fain had fared with them, but ere he spoke
The young Branch-bearer's words came back to him :
" Well hast thou kept thy promise ; wherefore take
A blessing for thy truth's sake—aye, a blessing
Shall win thee victory," while a tuneless peal
Rang from the topmost row of golden apples
Upon the fairy bough, and Cormac caught
The elder's thievish hand within his bosom
Upon the branch, and wrung it fiercely from him,
And shook it o'er him and his sophist crew ;
And lo ! they vanished gibbering before him,
A grinning troop of fleshless skeletons.

Again the King of Erin went his ways,
Nor now had been long journeying, when there stretched
An hundred-acred field before him, bright
With stooks of golden corn ; three spear-casts further,
Crowning a sudden, green, far-looking mound,
A mansion, many windowed, sunset-flattered
To topaz, ruby, amethyst, shone and sparkled
A thousand welcomes, while ; behind, a forest
Laughed back all emerald.
Through the field of corn
He swiftly strode, with noble heart presaging
His goal at last, and climbed the hill and sought
The mansion, took the hand-log in his hand
And boldly knocked. Immediate to the wall

The door sprang open of its own accord,
While from within a mighty summons came,
" In God's name enter ! " Straight he entered in,
Following the voice, and reached a royal hall,
Huge, black-oak-raftered, silver-pillared, hung
Its circuit through with brightly burnished arms,
Elk-antlers, giant boar-tusks, jewelled breakers—
By seven great archways pierced, with couches seven,
Silk canopied, yew-carven, fine-fur-covered
Betwixt each twain ; a royal champion's seat
Of beaten gold before its blazing hearth,
And on the seat a princely chieftain, clad
In many-coloured raiment, at his side
A bright apparelled Princess.
These arose
At Cormac's coming, and bespake him thus :
" Whoe'r thou art, oh ! stranger, 'tis no hour
To further fare on foot, seeing the sun
Is well-nigh set ; then sit thee down with us
And share our banquet, and abide the night
Beneath our roof, till rosy morn return."
Then Cormac, son of Art, sat gladly down.
" Go forth now to the grove," the woman cried,
" Oh ! goodman of the house ; thy spear in hand,
For lo ! there lacks sufficiency of meat
To sate our want." Therewith the chief arose,
His hunting spear in hand, and fared abroad ;
Nor tarried long without but soon returned
A great wood-ranging, acorn-crushing boar,
Fresh skinned and cleaned and quartered, on his back,
And in his hand a mighty log of pine ;

And cast them down before the fire; and thus
To Cormac and the Princess smiling spake:
"There have ye meat, now cook it for yourselves!"
"After what manner?" asked the son of Art.
"That I will teach thee," saith his host; "Arise
And make four quarters of this log of pine,
Then lay a quarter log upon the fire,
And o'er it one full quarter of the boar,
And tell a tale of truth, however short,
Above it, and that quarter shall be roast."
Then Cormac rose and caught a glittering axe,
And proved it keen and true, and eyed the wood,
And stepping backwards swung the biting steel
Once from his shoulder, and the great log fell
Clean cleft in twain; twice, thrice, and smote in half
Each equal portion.

Next the woman laid
A quarter faggot on the leaping fire,
And o'er it one full quarter of the swine.
Then Cormac spake: "Since each hath borne his part,
'Twere ill-befitting that the one, a guest,
Should further tell a tale of truth for two—
His host and hostess." "Right thou art forsooth,"
The Prince replied "And now methinks thy speech,
Matched with thy noble mien, bewrays thee royal;
Therefore my story first.
That boar is one
Of seven, yet could I feed the world with them;
For I have but to take his bones abroad,
And bury them beneath a sacred tree.

And, look, the sod begins to sway and surge,
Till sudden, from his scarce dug sepulchre,
The monstrous beast breaks bellowing away."
That tale was true; and lo! the flesh was roast.
"Tell now thy tale, fair princess," saith the king.
"I will," quoth she, "but do thou first lay down
Thy quarter log upon the leaping fire,
And o'er it one full quarter of the boar."
So it was done.
"Seven cows are mine," saith she,
"Snow white from horn to hoof, and not a day
Dawns or declines but these with matchless milk
Fill seven full kieves, and here's my hand to you,
My kine could milk enough to satisfy
The souls of all the sons of earth assembled
Athirst on yonder plain."
That tale was true.
And lo! her quarter of the boar was roast.
Then Cormac: "If thy tale be true indeed
Thy husband there is Mananan, thyself
His wedded wife; for on the face of earth
Exists there not the owner of such treasures,
Save Mananan alone, for to Tir Tairrngire
He went to seek thy hand and won it well,
And therewithal to dower these wondrous cows,
And coughed upon them till he quite constrained
Their udders to his will."
"Full wisely now
Hast thou divined us both!" cried Mananan.
"But tell a story for thy quarter now."
"Ay! sure," saith Cormac, "yet do thou lay down

Thy faggot now upon the leaping fire,
And over it thy quarter of the swine."
So it was done, and thus the king outspake:
"I come, indeed, upon an anxious quest,
For 'tis a year to-day my wife and son
And daughter, three most dear on earth to me,
Were borne afar." "By whom?" asked Mananan.
"A youth," the King replied, "there came to me,
Bearing a golden branch, for which my heart
Conceived so deep desire, I granted him
The full award of his own mouth for it,
The which he thus pronounced against my peace:
'Therefore, I claim thy wife, thy son, thy daughter—
Chaste Eithne, gallant Cairbre, winsome Ailbhe.'"

"If what thou sayest be true," cried Mananan,
"Thyself art Cormac, son of Art, the son
Of hundred-battled Conn." "That same am I,"
Quoth Cormac, "and in quest of these I come."
That tale was true, and lo! his quarter roast.

"Eat now thy meat," bespake him Mananan.
"I never yet broke bread," the king replied,
"Having two only in my company."
"Would'st thou consume it with three more, O Cormac?"
"Yea, good mine host, were they but dear to me."
Then Mananan arose and oped the door,
The farthest from his hearth, and straight led in
Chaste Eithne, gallant Cairbre, winsome Ailbhe;
And these in utter rapture around him clinging
The king embraced with tears and sobs of joy.

Thereafter Cormac and his Queen and Children
Sat down to meat, and on the festal board
A table-cloth of snowy silk was spread.
"'Tis a full precious thing thou seest before thee,
O Cormac, son of Art," saith Mananan;
"For never yet was food so delicate
But thrice demanded of this charméd cloth
Straight stands thereon." "Nay, that indeed is well,"
Quoth Cormac. Then the other smiling thrust
His hand into his girdle and drew forth
A golden cup and set it on his palm.
"A magic marvel is this cup of mine,
Seeing no drink can be desired therefrom,
But look, the same leaps bubbling to its brim!"
"That too is well, O Mananan!" "Moreover,
'Tis of the virtues of this magic cup
That when a lying tale is told before it,
Lo! it lies broken. Tell a tale of truth,
And on the instant it is whole again."
"Let that be proved, O Mananan!" "Then give ear,
O Cormac! This thy wife I bore from thee
In sooth hath had another husband since."
Therewith in pieces lay the fairy cup.
"A lying tale!" his princess answered him;
"Nor man nor woman hath she seen, save us
And these her children dear." That tale was true,
And straight the fairy cup was whole again.
"Priceless possessions verily are these,
O Mananan," saith Cormac. "Thine henceforth,
Two precious tokens, Cormac, of my friendship—
To wit, the Charméd Cloth and Magic Cup;

The Fairy Branch, moreover, treasure still.
And now the banquet waits us, and believe
That hadst thou here an host in multitude
Not one should miss of hospitable cheer ;
And in this cup I pledge thee, for I searched
Thine inmost soul with spells, that thou and these
Might share this joyful feast of fellowship."

Thereafterward they supped right royally ;
For not a meat they thought on but that cloth
Forthwith displayed, nor any drink desired
But straight it sparkled in that magic cup.
And for that fairy feast to Mananan
The four gave thanks exceeding, and arose
And bade their hosts good night, and laid them down
On kingly couches richly strewn for them,
And swiftly fell on slumber and sweet sleep ;
And where they woke upon the morrow morn
Was in their pleasant palace Liathdrum.

" Bravo ! Parson. But where did you raise your variety
Of that Text of the Old Ossianic Society ? "
" That's my secret, O'Hea, my Paul Pry of the Press.
But, An Creeveen, your ear ! "
" Was it he, now ? "
" No less ! "
Then O'Leary laughed out: " Let me try and translate
In a rann the thoughts running through Pat O'Hea's pate.

" My Paul Pry of the Press! Well, for that I'll your locks comb,
In 'The Comet,' my ecclesiastical Coxcomb!"
Cried an Creeveen: " O'Leary, don't meddle or mix,
Or conceive you can set two such friends at cross sticks!
What odds where the Parson procured his True Tale,
'Tis a genuine growth from the heart of the Gael,
With old roughnesses smoothed, but not polished away—
Tennysonian somewhat in parts, I would say;
Yet that great Wizard's spell, when our young poets shape
Hero tales in blank verse, who can wholly escape?
Well! McArt's Orpheus Story was out and out tragic,
And the other two Tales both escaped grief by magic;
But, before our Grand Shenachus Evening is done,
Can't we have just one screed full of frolicking fun?"
" Aye! aye!" we all answered, with shouts for Dick Dunn;
And Dick, the best playboy in old Dublin City,
Cried, " Hark, then, this dog'rel, no! Pig-erel Ditty!
Which I caught up in Kerry, a year or more back,
Beside Derryquin from one old Dr. Mack."

THE FAIRY PIG

Years ago Connor Glanny,
The honest poor man, he
Felt the bitter distress,
You may easily guess,
Whin I tell you he'd lost
All his fruit from the frost
(An' his apples the way
His rint he used pay);

An' his young wife confined
An' still on his mind;
An' their first little son
The weakliest one;
An' so, you may say,
The sight of that orchard
The little man tortured,
Wid sorra a pippin
Smilin' off of its kippin
To meet Quarter-day.

Well! the night barrin' two
That the rint it was due,
He up and away,
Before it was dawn,
To his cousin Jer Shea,
Beyant Derrynane,
To see could he borrow
The money agin
That day after to-morrow;
But Jer wasn't in,
But across at Eyries
Wid a boat-load of trees;
So Glanny turned back
By the mountainy track,
An' the head hangin' down,
Was trassin' for town;
Whin he chanced in Bunow,
On a small little sow,
On the naked rock lyin',
An' jist about dyin.'

It was awful hot weather,
An' Glanny was bate,
An' to Sneem altogether
Was six mile complate;
Still an' all for that same,
For the baste has its claim
On the honest man's mind;
"I'll not lave you behind,"
Says he, "in the sun,
On that scorchin' hot shelf,
Or to bacon itself
You'll shortly be done."
So off of the rock,
The two arms around her,
That bonneen he took,
An' faith an' he found her
A good weighty block,
An' was right glad to ground her
In the shade of the hedge
At the dusty road's edge.

Then, says he, "Faix I think
I'll bring you a drink,
You poor little baste,
You'd die softer at laste."
So back to a fountain
Where himself had just been,
He stretched up the mountain
For that little bonneen,
As if 'twas his daughter,

An' filled his caubeen
Full up wid spring wather,
Thin turned slowly back
Like a snail on his track,
For fear he'd be spillin'
The drink if he ran,
Though the heat it was killin
To a bareheaded man.

Thin the sow for that sup
Lookin' thankfully up,
Now, what do you think ?
Before you could wink,
Sucked it down in one drink,
Gave herself a good rowl,
An' thin, on my sowl !
Starts up, why, as frisky
As if she'd had whisky,
Racin' an' chasin'
Her tail wid her snout,
In a style so amazin'
Aroun' an' about,
That though Glanny felt sure
An' surer each minute
There was something quare in it
Performin' her cure,
He should still folly afther
That bonneen so droll,
His sides splittin' wid laughter
At each caracole.

So the sow held her path
To an ould Irish rath,
Thin roundin' about,
Wid a shake of her snout
Signin' where she was goin',
She made off for an owen,
Gladiatoring her way,
Wid her tail in the air,
Through such briars and furze,
As a fool, why, would say,
In five minutes 'd flay her
Wid that soft skin of hers,
Or prickle the baste
To a hedgehog at laste.

"Hould on," Glanny shouted,
"Or by that holly tree
Suicided you'll be,"
And made for to catch her.
But through it she snouted
Wid sorra a scratch, sure,
Just as if it was wool
She was giving a pull;
An' Glanny should folly
The pig, av ye plaze,
Right in through that holly
On his hands an' his knees,
Till she came to a cave,
Flagged above wid gallauns,
And the ould Ogham Crève
On the edge of the stones;

The Fairy Pig

As he saw, whin his sight
Understood the dim light
Of that hole underground.
But no symptom around,
Left, centre, or right,
Of the little bonneen
That had guided him in.
Till liftin' his eyes,
He sees wid surprise
Herself by the curl
Of her comical tail
Swingin' down from the roof
In a wonderful whirl.
Well! to have a sure proof
The appearance was raal,
Glanny grips her forenint;
Whin widout the laste hint
Of so awful a wonder,
Through the thick of a storm
Of terrible thunder,
By lightnin'
Most fright'nin'
He sees her transform,
Transform, an' transform;
Till a beautiful fairy,
Complete in her charms,
Wid a laugh, O how merry!
She leapt from his arms
To the moss, that the minute
She set her foot in it
Turned to velvet—no less—

Of a green like her dress.
While sofies and chairs,
An' harps and pianees,
Promenadin' in pairs,
Took their places, begannies,
As if walked to their stands
By invisible hands.
Thin goold plate an' cup
Came galloping up,
The purtiest of papers
Spread the four walls, be japers,
An' a crimson silk curtain
Crowned a chamber for sartin—
At laste I'd presume,
Widout any bravado—
Batin' out the drawing-room
Of the Jap'nese Mikado.

An' as you bewilder
Ourselves an' the childer
Up in London wid your
Prestidigitateur
And his droll conjuration,
That was just Glanny's station—
Cryin' out at each wonder,
As if at a show,
"O vo! O vo!"
"O thunder, O thunder!"
"O glory be to God!
"By my sowl, but that's odd!"
Till immediately after

Some such star-gazin' speech,
There arose such a screech
Of shrill little laughter,
That he faced sudden round,
An,' begorra, there found
A whole fairy squadroon,
Ivery single small one
Its sides splittin' wid fun—
Wid the former bonneen
In front for their Queen;
Who, beckn'in for silence,
"Pray pardon their vi'lence,
Mr. Connor," says she,
"For really my elves
"Will be makin' too free
"Sometimes wid themselves—
"Will ye whisht, all of ye!"
Thin she whispers to Glanny,
"In the whole of this part
"There never was any
"As gentle at heart
"As you,
"Aroo.
"Signs by—and because
"'Tis enchanted I was,
"Away up in Bunow,
"In the form of a sow,
"A small little sow,
"On the scorchin' rock lyin',
"An' just about dyin'

" Of the drought, you may say ;
" For each one hottest day
" Through the last fifty year—
" Wid not one to appear,
" To or out of the city,
" To show any pity
" To the little bonneen,—

" For that spell shouldn't cease,
" 'Till one came to release
" By liftin' me down
" To the road from the town,
" And climbin' the hill
" His caubeen for to fill
" Full up wid spring wather
" For me,
" Machree,
" As if for his daughter ;
" Till, Glanny, you came,
" And accomplished that same—
" An' I'm free to my joy
" Through the manes of you, boy !

" Now what can I do
" To ricompinse you ?
" Any wish that you have
" I'll give, as you gave ;
" Name it,
" An' claim it
" From me,"
Says she ;
" With no ' by your lave,' or

" Condition, or favour—
" I'll grant it, machree."
" Thank you kindly," says he,
" But I think you'll agree
" You never could grant
" All the wishes I want,
" Whin I tell you I've come
" From the sorrafullest home.
" The young wife confined,
" An' still on my mind,
" An' the small little son,
" The sickliest one,
" An' my apples all lost
" By the cruelest frost.
" An' my fruit the one way
" The rint I can pay—
" An' it due, to my sorrow,
" The day afther to-morrow."
Says she, " Then cheer up,
" An' I'll manage it all—
" But its fastin' you look
" For the bit and the sup ;
" So "—she here gave a call
To her fairy French cook—
" You'll stay here, an' dine
" On my mate and my wine ;
" Then you'll feel more the man
" To consider my plan."

Thin a table arose
Wid a cloth like the snows,

And upon it goold dishes
Full of soups and of fishes.
And mates and sweetmates
Hot an' cowld on the plates,
An' a soft pair of sates.

So she, why, and Connor
To that dinner sat down,
While, glory ! on my honor !
Aroun' an' aroun'
Wine and Guinness's stout
Kept pourin' itself out ;
An' the beautiful pratee,
Burstin' out of its jacket
In the height of its gai'ty,
Bounced up—O ! and crack it,
Melted off in the mout'—
So soft and delicious—
An' delightful side dishes,
Fish and fowl, they came skelpin',
An' mutton and pork,
Presentin' a helpin'
To each knife and each fork ;
Till, of all on the table
Glanny Connor was able
To manage no more.
Then, says she, " Now, astore,
" I won't lend you the goold,
" For we both might be fooled
" By its changing itself,
" Whin stored up on your shelf,

" To dock-leaves or grass—
" As is often the case.
" But I've got a surprise
" Will gladden your eyes
" When you're back at your home.
" But come, Glanny, come;
" Since so plainly you show
" Your impatience to go,
" Tharram pogue! an' good-bye,"
An' gives him a kiss.

Says Glanny, " Why, why,
" What's the manin' of this?
" O thunder, O thunder!
" What's this that I'm under?"
" Your orchard," so sweet,
It seemed for to say,
Then below at his feet
Died far, far away.
'Twas the set of the day,
And the sun's last ray
Showed him each leafy
Spray was heavy
Wid a smilin' store
Of apples galore—
O just the way,
For the world, like a bevy
Of girls in a play
Of hide an' seek,
Whom you find at last, after searchin' all day,
Wid the laugh on the lip and the smile on the cheek.

So each purty pippin
Curtsey'd off of its kippin'
Bright and blushin'
All over the tree.
And hark! see!
Who comes hushin',
Brave and rosy
As the rest—
Wid a shoheen, ho! so sweet and cosy—
A hearty child upon her breast?
Upon my life!
'Tis Glanny's wife,
An' Glanny's boy,
O joy! O joy!

Long and loud we applauded, then closed The Branch down,
And with friendly farewells scattered into the town."

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